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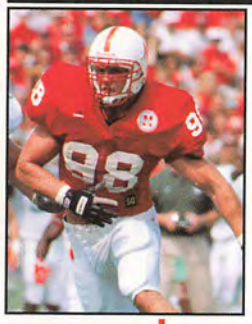

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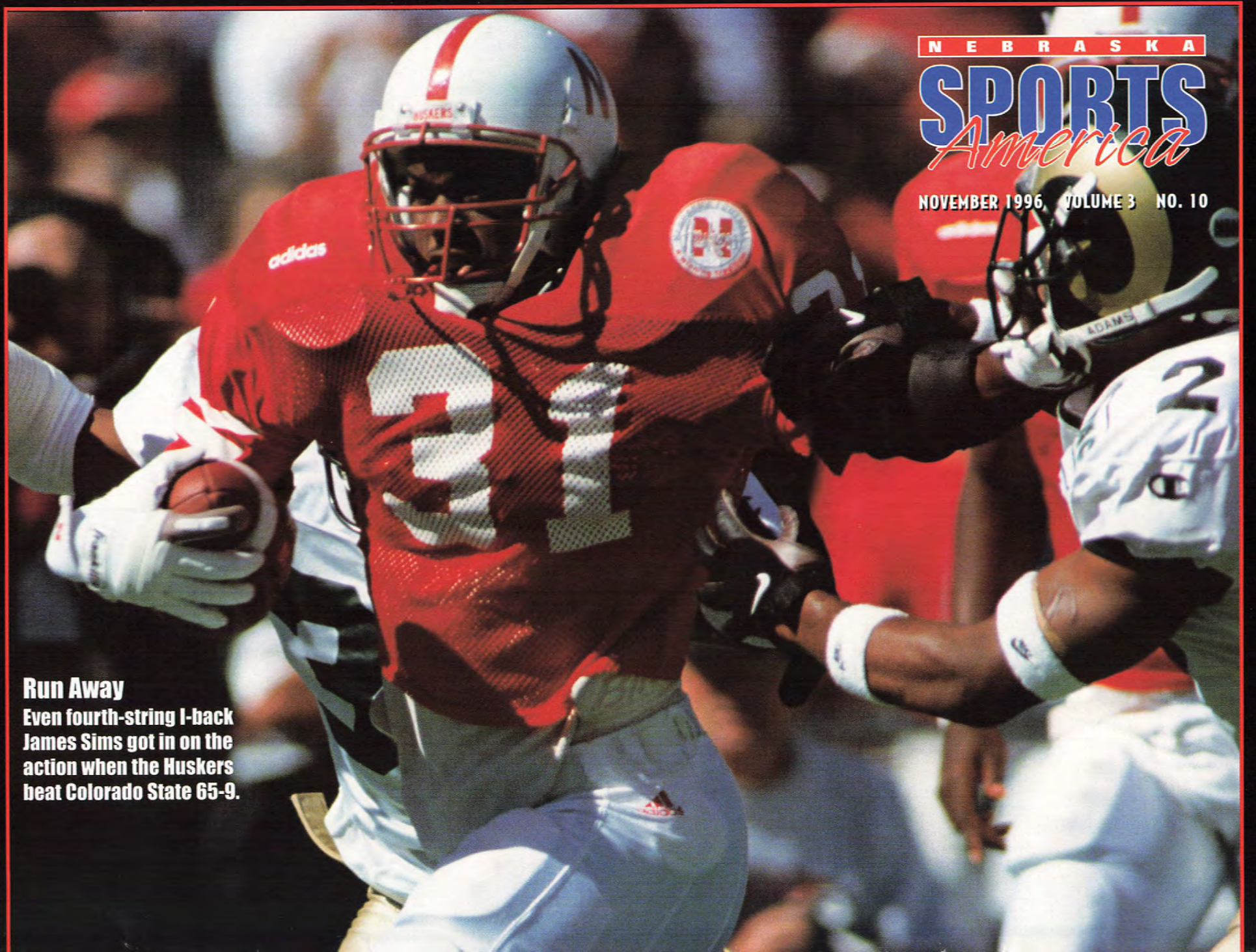

NEBRASKA
SPORTS America
NOVEMBER 1996 VOLUME 3 NO. 10

Run Away
Even fourth-string I-back James Sims got in on the action when the Huskers beat Colorado State 65-9.

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Letter from the Editor

The cover of our August issue asked the question: "Can the Huskers avoid the upset?"

Arizona State provided the answer Sept. 21 in a game that's now referred to as the "Disaster in the Desert."

Immediately after returning from Tempe, I picked up a copy of the August issue and paged through Anthony Flott's story, which centered on coaches whose teams had upset Nebraska, particularly former Iowa State coach Jim Walden and former Miami and Oklahoma coach Howard Schnellenberger. From their insight, Flott developed six keys to defeating Nebraska. How close did he come?

The first step was to "Hog the Pigskin" or, in other terms, maintain possession. The Sun Devils did just that, maintaining possession for nearly 13 minutes longer than the Huskers.

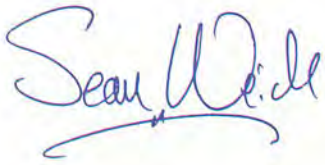
The second step was to "Grease the Ball" or force the Huskers into turnovers. Again, the Sun Devils prevailed in this category, turning the ball over once – on an interception – while Nebraska fumbled six times, losing three.

No. 3 was "Get the Stretcher," which focused on the importance of playing Nebraska when it is not at full strength. Nebraska did lose one of its marquee players, rush end Grant Wistrom, midway through the game, while also playing without another All-American candidate. Linebacker Terrell Farley was sitting out a two-game suspension.

Arizona State followed step No. 4 to perfection, "Airing it Out" against the weakest part of the Nebraska defense, the secondary. The Sun Devils rang up nearly 300 yards through the air via the arm of quarterback Jake "The Snake" Plummer.

The fifth step was another no-brainer: Stay home. Despite having nearly 25,000 Husker fans on hand at Sun Devil Stadium, their presence was barely audible above a throng of 74,089 pompon waving, often-screaming Arizona State fans. The crowd noise was so loud at one point that Nebraska center Aaron Taylor snapped the ball when Scott Frost was still calling the play.

The final step to beating Nebraska was to "Build a Brick Wall." This meant stopping the Huskers' ground-gaining machine. Again, Arizona State did just that, holding Nebraska to 130 yards rushing on 44 carries.We said a loss was inevitable. At the time, we just didn't know how hard it would be to stomach. Now, with the Huskers making a charge back up the national polls, there still is hope that Nebraska, like it nearly did following its national titles in 1970 and 1971, will get another shot at No. 1 despite being tagged with an early loss.



CORRECTIONS

- On page 20 of the October issue of *Nebraska Sports America*, a photo cutline misidentified Nebraska linebacker Jon Hesse as Ryan Terwilliger.
- Due to inaccurate information supplied to *Nebraska Sports America*, Deanna Gollobit was listed as being from Plainview High School. She is from Pierce High School.

Please send comments to Nebraska Sports America, P.O. Box 37791, Omaha, NE 68137-0791, or call (402) 333-8544 or (800) 333-8544 outside the Omaha area. Visit our site on the World Wide Web at http://www.nesports.com. Comments also can be sent via e-mail to Nebraska Sports America at nesports@synergy.net or by facsimile to (402) 333-6808.

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Michael has established himself as an internationally-recognized artist and sculptor through a number of commissions and presentations of his huge unique works-of-art. During 1985, he presented his masterpiece titled, "PARK CITY-AMERICA REMEMBERED" to former-President and Mrs. Gerald Ford for inclusion in the Smithsonian Institute. In 1976, Michael presented his first segment of Park City titled "TURN OF THE CENTURY PARK" to the White House. It was displayed during the Bi-Centennial in the Great Hall of Commerce in Washington, D.C. Michael's artwork has also been displayed at Disneyland and Disney World.

Michael's artwork reflects his attention to meticulous detail and his masterly ability to execute total reality, combining beauty with integrity of design. His personal philosophy is that art is for everyone. He strives to create quality, yet moderately-priced, sculptures. His near genius for knowing what the collector enjoys in art has carried him and his casting studio to the number-one pewter studio in the world.

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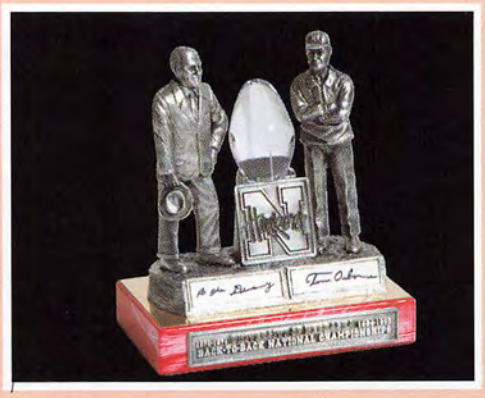

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Letters to the Editor

RATING THE WEB SITES OF THE BIG 12
SECOND ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!
NEBRASKA
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DEMOLITION MAN
Jared Tomich leads a defense aiming to be Nebraska's best of all time

I was sad to learn of Nebraska's loss. It felt like I lost one of my family members. I am stationed in Germany with the U.S. Army. Believe, me, I felt that loss all the way over here.

Tom Castellano, Captain, U.S. Army,
castellt@dcsint.hqusareur.army.mil

Some ASU fans needed more class

Although the Arizona State-Nebraska game was a little one-sided, we stuck it out to the end. But if we knew what we were in for, we would have left earlier. We were challenged to a fight and were harassed all the way to our hotel.

James Slagle
Laton, Calif.

Osborne needs to take firm stand

Instead of learning from his decisions, Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne continues down the win-at-any-cost road by reinstating Terrell Farley to the team. Tell me coach, when will you get to the point when you will simply tell members of your football team that ANY infraction with the law will bring dismissal for the year?

Until you take a firm stand, you not only have the rest of the nation doubting your motives, but you have a group of players that are led to believe that legal infractions, including arrests, weapons possession, DUI, sexual harassment, etc., will be written off in a one- or two-game suspension.

Jerry Ryan
Bellevue, Neb.

Which athlete on the cover the most?

I was surprised to see that Nebraska Sports America celebrated its two-year anniversary last month. Which athlete has appeared on the cover the most times?

Warren Bradley
Kansas City, Mo.

Former Nebraska quarterback Tommie Frazier has been featured on the cover of *Nebraska Sports America* (and before that, *Nebraska Sports Magazine*) more than anyone else. Frazier appeared on three covers. Three other Huskers, Scott Frost, Aaron Graham and Brook Berringer, each appeared twice.
— Editor

Sports America Internet site 'informative'

I just wanted to say that you guys have by far the most informative and interesting Husker site out there. The post-game coverage stuff is concise, complete and interesting. I especially enjoy the news reports from the "enemy's" side — what they wrote about the game.

Keep up the good work.

Dr. Asheesh Dewan
Dewan@worldnet.att.net

Osborne book review off the mark

I disagree with your review of Tom Osborne's new book "On Solid Ground." Dr. Tom is doing the best he can in a time when parental support for players is noticeably lacking. It's his job to defend himself and his players. If he hadn't written this book, Terrell Farley's driving under the influence charge could have easily led to Osborne getting fired.

Margaret Klein
Eugene, Ore.

Which Husker web site is 'official' site?

In your October issue you stated that http://nusports.unl.edu/football.html was the official Husker web page. The official Husker web site according to UNL's home page is http://huskerwebcast.com. Please take note of this.

Chris Pankonin
pp63853@navix.net

You must have missed the asterisk noting that *Sports America* visited the official sites as determined by Yahoo one week before the season. At that time, the site you mention was not on-line.
— Editor

WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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Athlete of the Month

BY SEAN WEIDE

Catching A Rising Star

Volleyball aficionados knew about Kim Behrends long before she made a spectacular showing at the state high school volleyball tournament last year.

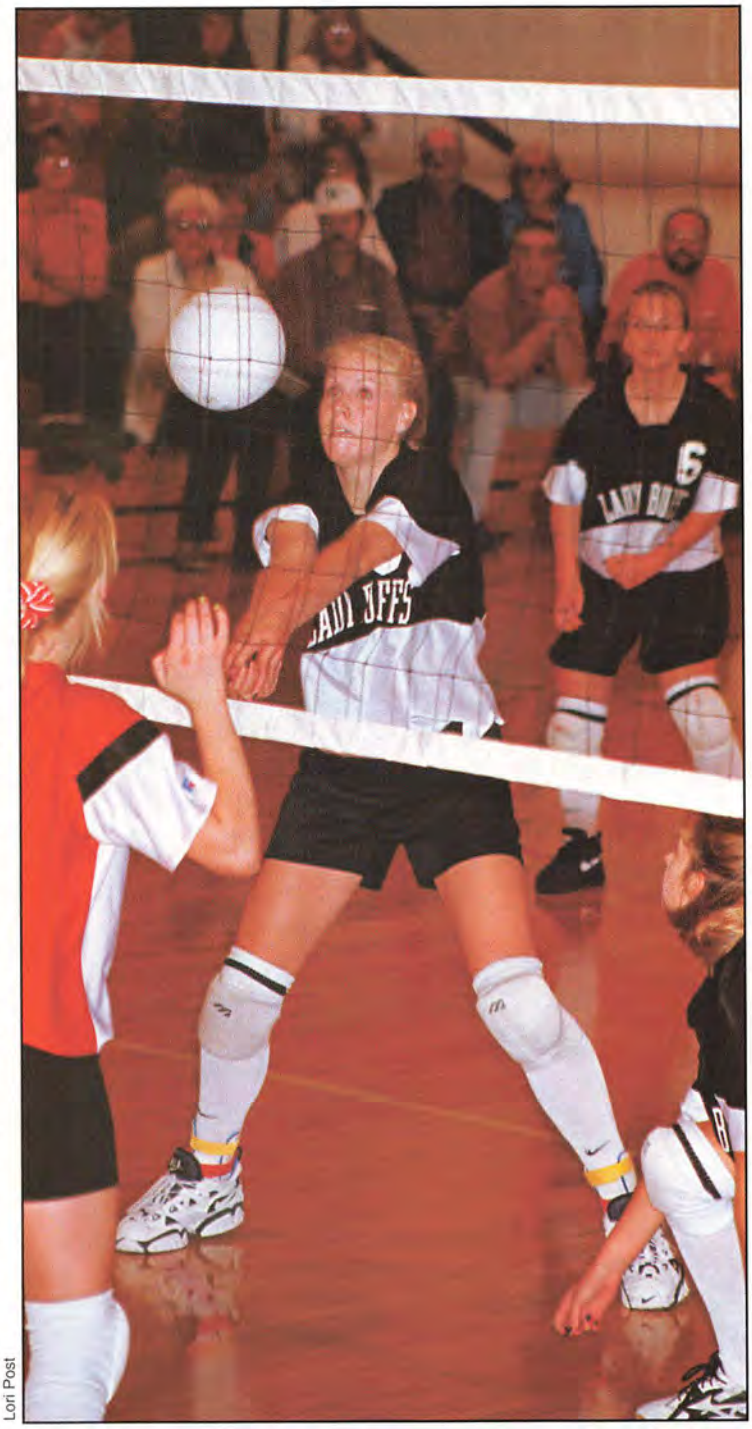
The senior from Chappell already was a force on the summer club volleyball scene with a powerful hitting style and quickness that belies her 6-foot stature.

Barring an upset in district tournament matches, Behrends' team also can be considered the favorite to repeat as Class D-1 state champions at the state tournament Nov. 15-16. The Lady Buffs returned five of six starters and were undefeated through the first eight weeks of the regular season, adding to their two-year, 39-match unbeaten streak.

Last year, Behrends led Chappell, a town of 1,095 located 13 miles north of the Colorado border in the Nebraska Panhandle, to the D-1 title in the school's first appearance at the state tournament. And, if there were any observers on the eastern end of the state doubting her ability, Behrends set the record straight in the state final by blasting a record 28 kills.

"She is definitely one of the top recruits in the nation," said Bill Feldman, a recruiting expert out of Chicago. "She's one of few big kids with good mobility."

Even before the start of this season, Behrends had rewritten the state record books, owning Class D-1 kill records for a match, season and career.



Lori Post

Kim Behrends has her sights set on being a force in the college ranks, too.

By the time she is finished, she will be the most prolific hitter in Nebraska high school history, regardless of class.

"She's probably playing at a higher level than she was last year," said her father, Jim, who coaches Chappell's volleyball team. "She's definitely gotten a lot stronger."

Later this month, Behrends will end months of speculation when she announces where she will attend college. More than 100 schools recruited her, including traditional volleyball powers such as Nebraska, UCLA and Stanford.

"I wanted to play for a top 25 team," Behrends said. "Location really didn't matter, but I do want to play for a coach whom I like."

Long-time Oshkosh Coach Jim Mather, whose team played Chappell several times this season, said trying to dig and block Behrends' powerful spikes begins with a little self-defense.

"You hope you don't get any of your players hurt out there," Mather joked. "But seriously, she has nothing lacking as far as quickness and agility. I think we're as glad as anybody that she's graduating." NSA

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Out of BOUNDS

BY JIM ROSE

He Could Be Homecoming King

Where did this game take a wrong turn? When did the kicking game get the boot? Explain this. The game is football. Field goals are only one-half as good as touchdowns. Heck, even safeties do more for you than the PAT. Then there are the kickers themselves. When was the last time a kicker was elected high school homecoming king? You've seen it. The homecoming committee invades the coach's halftime speech to roll out the quarterback or some linebacker. There he stands, drenched in sweat, hair messed up, uniform wearing symbols of both the other team and the 80-yard touchdown drive at the end of the second quarter while that wimp kicker, who hasn't even needed his helmet all night, shines like the top of a dining room table. No respect. Remember all those "punt, pass and kick" competitions they used to show on the Monday night game? Sure, the audience got a sneak preview of all the junior Elways, Marinos and Kellys; but kicker? Forget it.

Of course the NFL has been all but too quick to make these dudes the machismo symbol of the grit that is pro football. That tight jersey around former Vikings kicker Fred Cox made him look more like a league bowler than a pro athlete. Ever see a one-bar facemask on a strong safety? Once I watched Chiefs' kicker Nick Lowery line up for a 40-yarder wearing Gortex under his jersey. Ex-kicker Tony Franklin had the Eagles' equipment guy make up a special glove for his foot. Athleticism has sufficiently bypassed this position. Garo Yapremian's Hall-of-Fame folly in Super Bowl VII was the league's first attempt at producing its own situation comedy. And when was the last time the kicker actually made the tackle once the return man got into the open field?

All of this serves to remind us just how different and refreshing Kris Brown, Nebraska's splendid sophomore foot soldier from South Lake Texas, really is. He kicks field goals straight as a Baptist minister from about anywhere in the stadium. His kickoffs sail so high and far that they come back to earth stuck with port-of-call stickers. He's got rubber-neck good looks, a voice rich as maple syrup and that bionic foot. Kicking? Oh, he's good at it. As a frosh, his toe piled up 97 points, a record for kickers at Nebraska. Three times he connected on three field goals in a single game. This year, he nailed four of them against K-State.

"It's a God-given talent and I appreciate it," Brown said. "I know I'm lucky to be here at the best college football school in the country playing for the best coach. It wouldn't be right if I didn't give it my best every time."

Eric Francis

Brown's talents extend beyond kicking.

Brown has maximized his gift. He was an all-star in high school. He played three sports, excelling at football. His team made the playoffs with Brown as the starting quarterback. Kicking was the extra at first before he realized that to master it was to master his own mind.

"Kicking is a lot talent, but it's a lot more mental," he explained. "You have to understand the down side. You confront the down side, you know . . . the miss. You have a job out there to kick it accurately and make the play. If you don't, you alone have let the team down."

That's a beast of burden not lost on Brown.

In the summer before he arrived in Lincoln, Brown was chosen to represent the Texas high school all-stars in the annual "Oil Bowl" game against Oklahoma. Twice in the last minute, Brown shanked potential game winners. Those Scott Norwood moments were the last of its kind for Brown. Mr. Success has been parked right next to him ever since.

"I believe that bad times come for all athletes," he said. "But what separates the great athletes from those who wish they were great is how you react. Are you gonna be supportive and positive even when things aren't going your way? Are you gonna get your own confidence back or rely on somebody else? Everybody is great when times are good, but what about when times are bad?"

Brown works hard to be part of the team. Most kickers are lonely. The adoration for hitting the big kick is fleeting while the ostracism for missing is agonizingly long. Brown has been earnest in proving himself one of the guys hoping that the rest of the Huskers will stand by him should that fateful kick sail wide right or left. To visibly join the fraternity of defensive linemen early this season, he had his head shaved.

"I'm happy to do it. And I think it means something to those guys," he said. "They work hard all summer and fall, hitting each other in practice and in games. It's no secret, the kickers don't practice like that. We practice the mental part and treating each kick in practice like it's a kick to win the game. And, even though the other guys appreciate our job, it's no fun to look across the practice field and see what looks like the kickers just messing around." NSA

Jim Rose is co-host of "Sports Nightly with Jim Rose and Gary Java" on the Pinnacle Sports Network.

Boom RIGHT HERE

BY GARY JAVA

Stop Complaining About Winter

Honest, I haven't totally lost it — heavy emphasis on the "totally" — but if it has to be winter for hoops and hockey to start, then bring on the dark, cold, windy, snowy, icy nights.

I know it's only November, and there are some monster football games left to be played: Colorado-Nebraska, Michigan-Ohio State, Notre Dame-USC, Florida State-Florida, Arizona State-Arizona, Army-Navy.

But, by November, I guess I expect big football games to be there.

So, being a greedy American, let's get down to the big games and peek ahead to some indoor entertainment and the impending doom of "stoopid" ol' winter.

I mean, if you choose to live in this winter climate, and it is **your choice** in the end, then at least hoops and hockey lend some redeeming social value to your least favorite season. Whether you're nice and toasty in front of the tube for a nice romantic, cuddly evening of forechecking and Vitale, or if you brave the elements to feel the excitement of a packed house for high school or college basketball or one of the state's two USHL hockey teams, ya' gotta admit that it makes our darkest, bleakest, most miserable season at least tolerable, if not downright enjoyable.

At least once a week, all winter long, someone says to me "Hey Java ('cause that's my name), you grew up in Buffalo, you oughtta be used to this." Wrong, parka breath! First of all, it doesn't get this cold and windy in Buffalo. They don't get those "Alberta Clippers" and "Nanookian Nippers" that blow down the Plains from Canada and, second, my bones and joints are 18 years older than they were the last time I lived back there, and they hurt a lot more each creaky step I take toward a sub-zero car after a basketball or hockey game.

But as you may have noticed, I don't like to whine and complain about Nebraska winters because they don't last from Labor Day to opening day of baseball season, like they do back East, and because our two Division I hoops teams are better than anything western New York can ever hope to offer.

And a reason I'm really looking forward to this winter is Creighton's super-soph, Rodney Buford, last year's Missouri Valley Conference Freshman-of-the-Year and Newcomer-of-the-Year, and a preseason all-conference selection.

Eric Francis

Keeping Rodney Buford away from the basket isn't easy.

Dana Altman's 6-foot-5 swingman from Vincent High School in Milwaukee is the real deal. And a really nice, humble, fun-loving young man, who despite his offensive heroics last year, really ought to put on some shows in the partially remodeled Civic Auditorium this season.

Buford has gotten stronger and isn't the young freshman who turned 18 three weeks before the start of last season anymore.

Now think about this: Bradley basketball fans have had some pretty good hoops over the past 40 to 50 years. And Rodney Buford — the youngest player on the court — silenced the raucous fans in the Peoria Civic Center last Jan. 10 with two high-flying alley-oop slams — one of them from behind the backboard — over MVC Player-of-the-Year Anthony Parker. Actually, he didn't silence the Bradley crowd, he just took them from their noisy "dee-fense" chants to a respectful, almost reverent "oooh."

As Bluejay Coach Dana Altman told me last January, "Rodney can be one of those really special players if he keeps working at it." That's high praise from the demanding Wilber, Neb., native, who throws high praise around about as often as Iowa State throws the football. That's high praise from a coach who has won various coach-of-the-year awards and post-season berths at every level throughout his college coaching career, with or without his all-time best, Mitch Richmond.

Look at it this way. It took something special to start putting bodies and crowd noise back in Omaha's Civic Auditorium last winter — something special like Altman and Buford.

And speaking of super-sophs, I can't wait to see an older, wiser Tyronn Lue at the wheel of Danny Nee's Huskers this winter. Yeah, we all remember the internal turmoil of last February that many of you allowed to tarnish Nebraska's NIT Championship, but give Nee, Lue and the returning players the benefit of the doubt and assume last year's problems aren't around to be this year's problems.

If you can't be that forgiving, then bundle up: winter's coming. NSA

Gary Java is co-host of "Sports Nightly with Jim Rose and Gary Java" on the Pinnacle Sports Network.

40 Average number of e-mail messages University of Nebraska-Lincoln athletic director Bill Byrne said he receives each day.

Bob Berry

Matt Davison is the first Nebraska football recruit out of Tecumseh since fullback Tony Davis in the early 1970s.

1997 Nebraska Football Recruits

The following high school seniors have verbally committed to play football at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln next fall.

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown (High School)
Jamie Burrow	LB/TE	6-1	225	Ames, Iowa (Ames)
Eric Crouch	QB	6-1	185	Omaha, Neb. (Millard North)
Matt Davison	WR	6-2	180	Tecumseh, Neb. (Tecumseh)
Kyle Kollmorgen	OL	6-5	270	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
Bobby Newcombe	QB	6-0	185	Albuquerque, N.M. (Highland)
Erwin Swiney	WR	6-0	175	Lincoln, Neb. (Northeast)
Kyle Vanden Bosch	LB	6-5	240	Larchwood, Iowa (West Lyon)
Mark Vedral	RB	6-1	200	Gregory, S.D. (Gregory)
Dave Volk	OL	6-5	255	Battle Creek, Neb. (Battle Creek)

Novacek Among Third Class of High School Hall of Famers

Twenty-one contributors to Nebraska high school athletics were honored Oct. 6 at the 1996 Hall of Fame banquet in Lincoln.

This year's inductees brings to 72 the number of pioneers, athletes, coaches and contributors honored for their contributions to Nebraska's high school sports scene. This is the third class of inductees into the hall, which is headquartered in Gothenburg, Neb.

Novacek

Don Liebig

The list of 1996 inductees includes NFL greats Marlin Briscoe (Miami Dolphins, Omaha South) and Jay Novacek of the Dallas Cowboys, and Gothenburg High, high school coaching legends Fred Letheby (Madison) and Mike Lehl (Blair) and former Husker stars Dean Steinkuhler (Sterling) and Tom Novak (Omaha South). Other inductees were Jug Brown (Lincoln High), Fred Brown (Omaha Tech), W.H. Browne (Lincoln High), Clint John (Cambridge), Monte Kiffin (Lexington), Bill Madden (Scottsbluff), Ike Mahoney (Omaha Tech), Leo McKillip (McCook), Carol Moseke Frost (Cedar Rapids), Bill Pfeiff (Lincoln High), Scott Poehling (Fremont Bergan), Herb Reese (Omaha Central), Mick Tingelhoff (Lexington), Dutch White (Omaha Tech) and Edsel Wibbels (Wolbach).

You Pick 'Em

Who are Sports America's Athletes and Coach of the Year?

We'd like to hear from you. What male and female athletes made the biggest impact on the Nebraska sports scene during 1996? What coach is most deserving of Sports America's "Coach of the Year" honors? From now until Nov. 10, Sports America is accepting your nominations for male and female Athlete of the Year and Coach of the Year. You may mail, fax or e-mail your nominations to us. See the bottom of page 4 for the respective addresses and numbers.

1995 WINNERS

Allison Weston
University of Nebraska (Female)

Ahman Green
University of Nebraska (Male)

Mike Evans
Bellevue University (Coach)

Sports Net

The Nebraska women's golf team won the inaugural Big 12 Preview Tournament by 18 strokes and set a school record in the process by shooting a 54-hole total of 909 in College Station, Texas, on Oct. 8. Freshman **Hanne Nyquist** shot a final round 77 to finish third and lead the Husker effort.

Three Metro Conference players rushed for more than 200 yards on Sept. 20 — Millard North quarterback **Eric Crouch** (252 vs. Bellevue West), Papillion-LaVista I-back **Paul Hunt** (231 vs. Omaha Benson) and Omaha Northwest I-back **Jim Mullen** (230 vs. Bellevue East).

Theresa (Stelling) Gosnell and **Tim Dooling** repeated as individual champions at the 16th annual Corporate Cup run in Omaha Sept. 22. It was Dooling's fifth straight men's title and his seventh overall. Gosnell has won the 10-kilometer race both times she has entered it.

Former Nebraska basketball player **Jason Glock** has been named the 1996 recipient of the Paul Amen Scholar-Athlete Award. The award is presented annually to an outstanding man or woman at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln who participated in football, basketball or baseball and who also is a graduate of a Nebraska high school. Glock, a December 1995 graduate, will receive a $2,000 award.

Glock

Columbus Scotus volleyball coach **John Petersen** picked up his 400th career coaching victory Sept. 28 when the Shamrocks defeated longtime nemesis Grand Island Central Catholic.

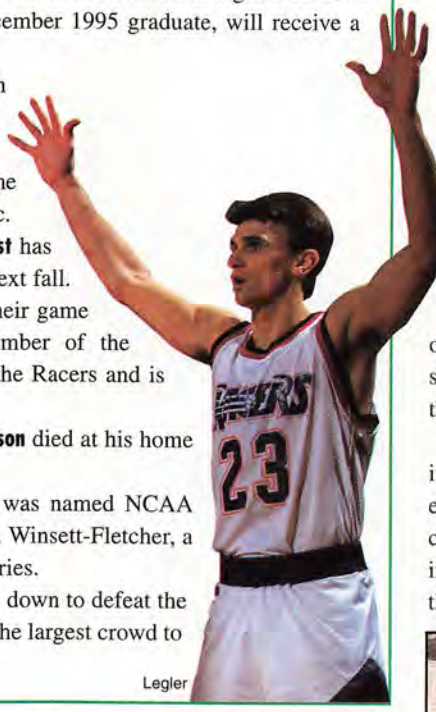
Wausa High School three-sport standout **Candace Bloomquist** has orally committed to play basketball at Creighton University next fall.

The Omaha Racers will retire **Tim Legler's** jersey before their game against the Yakima Sun Kings on Nov. 16. Now a member of the Washington Bullets, Legler played parts of five seasons for the Racers and is the club's all-time leading scorer.

Lincoln Northeast junior legion baseball coach **Mike Peterson** died at his home of a suspected blood clot on Oct. 14. He was 27.

Former Nebraska volleyball player **Billie Winsett-Fletcher** was named NCAA Woman of the Year at an awards dinner in Kansas City Oct. 6. Winsett-Fletcher, a native of Booneville, Ind., was chosen from a field of 333 entries.

The University of Nebraska at Omaha came from two sets down to defeat the University of Nebraska at Kearney Oct. 15 in Kearney before the largest crowd to ever watch a volleyball match in NCAA Division II history.


Legler

Devaney Collection to be Auctioned This Month

More than 250 items from the personal collection of former University of Nebraska-Lincoln football coach Bob Devaney will be auctioned off to the highest bidder in Omaha.

The money generated from the auction of the memorabilia will go to several charities.

Auction coordinator Larry Shupe of Casey's Memorabilia said the 266 items up for bid have a minimum bid between $15 and $500. Bids will be accepted by mail, phone and facsimile.

"Anyone who wants to own something of Devaney's should be able to find something," Shupe said.

Among the more unusual items are a set of custom engraved "Bob Devaney" golf clubs, a clipboard Devaney used in his last game at Nebraska and the official invitation for the

Eric Francis

Huskers to participate in the 1974 Sugar Bowl.

A catalog of the items for sale costs $4 and is available by calling (402) 334-3331 or writing: Casey's Memorabilia 13225 C Street Omaha, NE 68144.

It Doesn't Get Much Easier

The Nebraska football is certain to receive criticism next fall when it opens the season with games against the Akron Zips (Aug. 30) and the Central Florida Knights (Sept. 13).

The two open dates had to be filled when Northern Illinois and Arkansas State bought their way out of previously scheduled games in Lincoln against the Huskers.

Akron and Central Florida may be Division I schools, but they are hardly formidable opponents for a team that has won two national championships and is working on a third. Akron and Central Florida had a combined 3-10 record through the first six weeks of this season.

Over the last nine seasons, the Huskers have played a total of 37 nonconference games, of which only eight matched them against an opponent ranked at the time in at least one of the two major polls. In those eight games, the Huskers were 4-4.

1997 NEBRASKA FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

Sept. 6	Akron
Sept. 13	Central Florida
Sept. 20	at Washington
Oct. 4	Kansas State
Oct. 11	at Baylor
Oct. 18	Texas Tech
Oct. 25	at Kansas
Nov. 1	Oklahoma
Nov. 8	at Missouri
Nov. 15	Iowa State
Nov. 27 or 28	at Colorado

*Red denotes home games.

HALFBACK ON HORSEBACK?

Jeremy Berggren of Prague High School was one of several players who rode horses the night before the Panthers' game against Benedict. Prague competes in six-man football, a sport invented in Nebraska. To read more about six-man football, turn to page 50.

Eric Francis

THE TOM OZ-BURN WATCH

This month's entry comes from Omaha radio station KFAB, which advertises itself as "your Husker authority for the last 70 years." On the same commercial, it invites listeners to tune in each week to the "Talk To Tom Oz-BORN show."

Sports America's monthly glance at people and organizations who mispronounce the name of one of college football's greatest coaches.

Chalk Talk

Just how bad was the criticism of Nebraska quarterback Scott Frost following the Huskers' loss at Arizona State? Upon their return from Tempe, Frost's parents, Larry and Carol, had to get an unlisted telephone number . . . An interesting exchange on the Colorado State sidelines between a CSU linebacker and his coach after Matt Turman entered the game: "I couldn't see that guy back there. He's just a little guy, coach." . . . Looking back now, it's easy to see why Kate McEwen refused all interview requests by the media — including one from Sports America — after being assaulted by former Husker Lawrence Phillips. After all, if McEwen had spoken in detail about the incident she wouldn't have had the leverage necessary to force Phillips into a settlement after filing a lawsuit against the current St. Louis Rams player.

ON THE WEB

A sampling of posts to the Internet's "Husker Mailing List" (http://www.huskers.com/list") following Arizona State's upset of Nebraska:

"Poor Preparation" • "Bandwagon Jumpers" • "Frost Has No Clue"
"Exactly Why We Lost" • "It's Been A Great Run"
"Turman Should Be The Guy" • "Hell Freezes Over"

FROM Here TO There

Harvey

Eric Francis

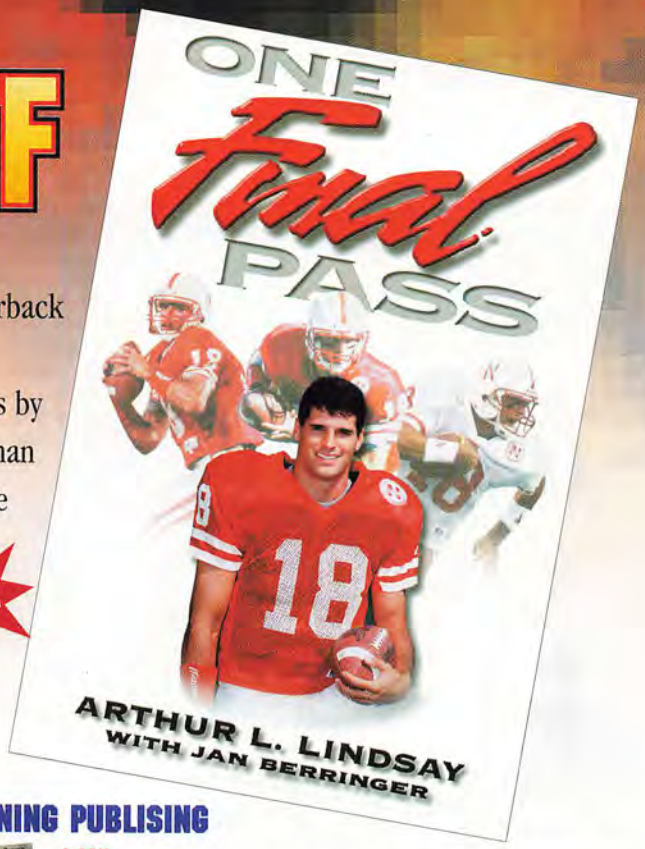
Omaha Duchesne soccer coach **Dan Harvey** resigned his position Sept. 17 citing personal reasons. Harvey coached the school to four state girls soccer titles and two runner-up trophies. He will retain his position as soccer coach at the College of St. Mary.

Mike Dobbs was named interim boys basketball coach at Lincoln Southeast following the reassignment of **J.R. Connell** to a junior high school in Lincoln. Dubbs, a Lincoln East graduate, was the Knights' junior varsity coach the past three seasons. Connell compiled a 100-52 record at Southeast.

Wayne State sports information director **Jerry Rashid** resigned in early October to take a similar position at Stetson University.

Kevin Kugler has been named director of broadcasting and public relations for the Omaha Racers basketball team.

HUSKER STUFF



One Final Pass is the story of Nebraska quarterback Brook Berringer and his life of tragedy turned into triumph.

Written by Berringer's friend, Art Lindsay, with contributions by Brook's mom, Jan, this book details the life and death of the man who was to become the best-known backup quarterback in the country!

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266 page - Hardback
ISBN: 0-964899-21-3
Price $26.95

THE ASSEMBLY LINE

This book, written by Nebraska Offensive Line Coach Milt Tenopir, will help you:

- Learn Nebraska's complete pass protection package
- Understand Nebraska's offensive approach
- Motivate and evaluate your offensive linemen
- Create a practice routine for your linemen
- Create off-season workouts

218 page - Hardback
ISBN: 1-887002-34-0
Price $24.95

HUSKER TRIVIA

Husker Trivia is full of fun and challenging questions from the football history of the Nebraska Cornhuskers. The questions cover the entire history of Nebraska football from 1890 through recent back-to-back national championship seasons. Foreword by Coach Turner Gill.

216 page - Paperback
ISBN: 1-887002-37-5
Price $10.95

1997 BIG RED ADVENTURE CALENDAR

The 1997 Big Red Adventure Calendar provides sixteen months of framable images from Nebraska's 94-95 back-to-back national championships. Calendar size is 17 x 22. Makes for a great gift!

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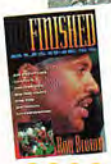

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Unfinished Business is an assistant coach's perspective on the Husker's '94 national championship season. Receiver's Coach Ron Brown details his perspective of this exciting football season. It begins with the heart-breaking loss to Florida State in the Orange Bowl and concludes with the Husker victory over Miami. It's more than just a recap of the season—Brown's perspective includes his view of success and more importantly, life.

126 pages - Paperback
ISBN: 1-887002-22-7
Price $7.95

I CAN

In this biography, Art Lindsay shares with you Ron Brown's search for success. He shares Ron's struggles, victories, and search for meaning in life. If you're a Big Red football fan—get ready. You're about to look at life through the eyes of a former athlete and current Husker coach. Even if you're not a football fan, you'll enjoy reading about Ron's experiences. Without a doubt, you're going to learn a lot about football and life. What Ron Brown has learned in life, could change yours.

162 pages - Paperback
ISBN: 1-887002-01-4
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THE MARK OF A CHAMPION

Nebraska Assistant Football Coach Ron Brown describes the four ingredients required for a team to have a championship season. Vivid examples are provided through the personality characteristics of Husker receivers Clester Johnson, Jon Vedral, Reggie Baul and Brendan Holbein. Brown further explains how these same ingredients are needed in the most important game of all…the game of life.

32 page - Paperback
ISBN: 1-887002-33-2
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BEHIND EVERY CHAMPION

Twenty-one seniors share their personal stories and reflect on their Nebraska football careers including two national championships! This 240 page, 6 x 9 hardcover book takes you beyond the playing field, beyond the locker room, behind the facemasks. Foreword written by Coach Tom Osborne.

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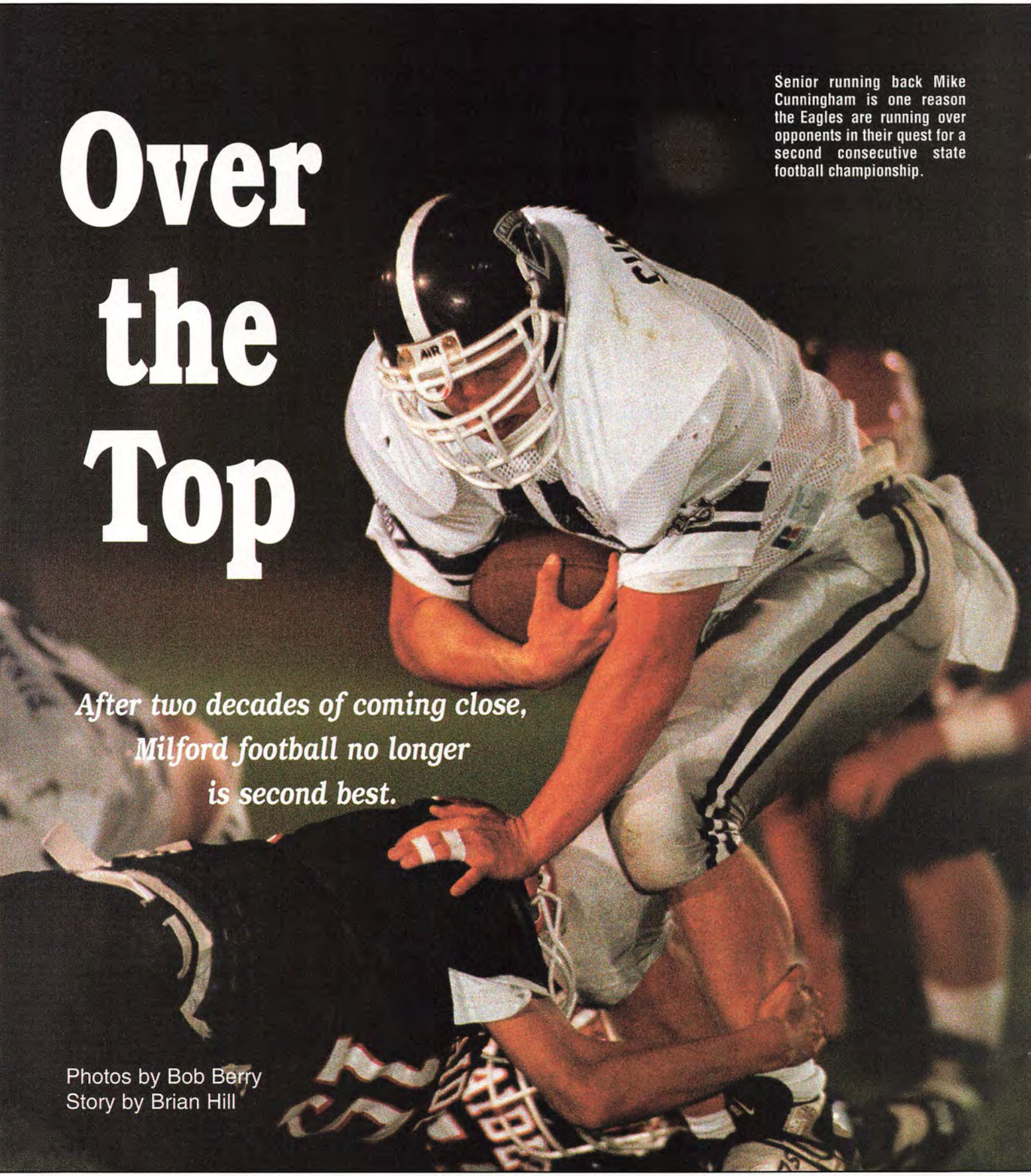

Senior running back Mike Cunningham is one reason the Eagles are running over opponents in their quest for a second consecutive state football championship.

After two decades of coming close, Milford football no longer is second best.

Photos by Bob Berry
Story by Brian Hill

Marty Hingst has a constant reminder of his tenure as football coach at Milford High School.

"My son, No. 4 over there, was a baby when we came here in 1979," Hingst recalled.

Kyle Hingst, now a senior, is in his third season as the starting quarterback and accounted for more than 1,000 yards of total offense to help lead the Eagles to an unbeaten (13-0) season and their first state championship last fall. The climax of that dream season was a 21-10 victory over perennial power and four-time Class C-1 champion Battle Creek last November in Milford.

The success has carried over into this season. The Eagles easily won the first seven games of the season to extend their win streak to 21 games. They outscored their opponents 341-40 and posted three shutouts.

"We're surprised a little bit, as well as we're doing this year," Hingst said. "It's just one of those team deals. Part of it is, we had real good skill people coming back."

Although the Eagles suffered heavy graduation losses, including two-time 1,000-yard rusher Hank Piening and most of their starting offensive line, the cupboard was far from bare. Three of Milford's returning starters — Mike Cunningham, Dave Bishop and Chad Geiger — were all-state selections last year.

Cunningham, a 6-foot-1, 217-pound senior linebacker, was the leading tackler on a Milford defense that held its opponents to an average of eight points per game and was a second-team all-class, all-state selection by the Lincoln Journal Star.

"He's very talented, extremely powerful and still quick," Hingst said. "He plays with a lot of emotion every down and is a hard worker. You want that in a linebacker."

On offense, Cunningham showed his versatility by moving from the line, where he had started as a freshman and sophomore, to the backfield. After starting at left guard the first two games last season, he moved to fullback when starter Brandon Roth went down with a broken leg. Cunningham responded with 977 yards and eight touchdowns and has stayed in his new home this season.

The starting offensive backfield also includes junior running back Jason Welch, who filled in for two games when Piening was injured last fall. Roth has moved to tight end, and the 6-4, 225-pound senior three-year starter plays linebacker on defense.

Bishop, a 6-0, 245-pound senior center, was an all-state offensive lineman and starts in the defensive line. The three-year starter leads the rebuilt offensive line.

Defensive back Chad Geiger intercepted 17 passes in 13 games last year as a sophomore.

"We lost four of our five offensive linemen, and they were very good to us," Hingst said. "All were starters for two or three years. Our backups got time, but we don't have quite as much depth as we'd like."

The third returning all-stater is Geiger, a 5-11, 165-pound junior free safety. He intercepted 17 passes last season, including three in one game.

Geiger, who also is a talented receiver and kick returner, duplicated that feat in a playoff victory over Wahoo.

They are among a group of 19 lettermen trying to keep the purple and white on top this season.

"We talked a lot during the summer about how we may stumble early in the year," Hingst said, "but tradition is we get better and better toward the end, so maybe we've got by some of the flopping around early on."

Hingst said hard work and dedication has helped the Eagles continue their momentum into this season. The Eagles were equally as dominant last year when they outscored their opponents 381-104.

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Coach Marty Hingst saw the potential in his players when they were in grade school.

side is there isn't a whole lot that frightens us or is necessarily new," Hingst said. "The difference between these kids and the other Milford kids over the years is that these guys have gotten in the weight room, and they run during the summer. Conditioning-wise, it isn't near as much work to get people in shape when they're already in shape coming in."

The father and football coach, who entered this season with a 141-74-2 record, has followed the group of players who produced the current run through the school system and saw the potential.

"Back in grade school, I guess that's when it was, I went over and watched some elementary music programs, and we had all these big sixth-grade bodies," Hingst said. "Those are the kids who graduated last year that were primarily linemen. And then, we had good athletes in this class also. We were really excited, particularly about last year, where we thought we had two groups coming together."

Milford struggled through a "one of those years" 5-4 season in 1994. "We got beat in overtime by Centennial, and they were rated at the time," Hingst said. "It was just one of those years where you give me two plays during a ballgame, and we'd have been in the state playoffs. But, we started a lot of these guys who are seniors this year as sophomores."

That set the stage for higher expectations last season.

"We were excited, but Milford had never won a state championship, so we were never thinking about state championships and that type of thing," Hingst said. "We were just thinking we'd have a good season, maybe one loss during the year or something. And then those kids ran off 13 in a row . . . and now this year."

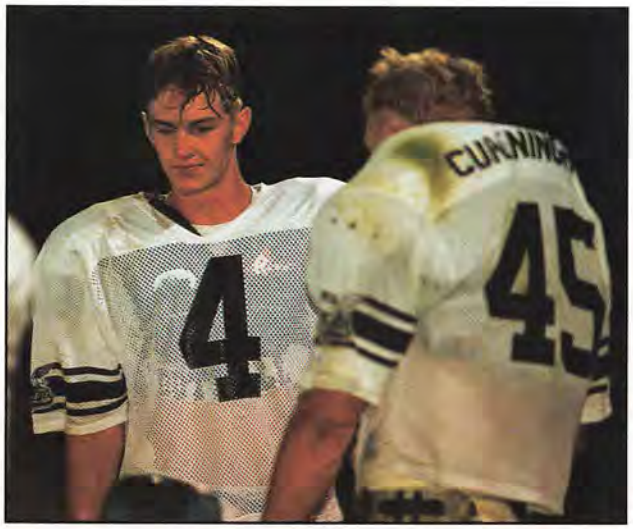
Milford's championship run came in its sixth appearance in the state playoffs. Hingst's first year at the school also marked the Eagles' first appearance in the playoffs. They lost to Fremont Bergan 9-6 in the semifinals of what was then an eight-team field. Beginning in 1984, Milford made the Class C-1 playoffs for three straight years, each time losing in the second round. The Eagles fell in the first round in 1992.

Then, there was last year. Milford defeated Adams Central 34-20, Gretna 14-8 and Wahoo 34-14 to earn the right to face Battle Creek, which was making its eighth appearance in the C-1 championship game.

"I remember the feelings before the ballgame and how anxious we were, perhaps even tight, I guess you could describe it," Hingst said. "We met in the morning as we always do when we don't have school. At that time, the guys were pretty loose, and I was very tight. And then, as the day went along, it just went in reverse. I thought they were really anxious, really tight going into the ballgame. Before the game, it was just kind of ... I won't say mystical, but it was as if it was a "Twilight Zone" type of thing. Then once we got playing, it was a regular ballgame, except there was a lot more at stake."

The Eagles came through and, Hingst said, the state championship has given the Seward County community of 1,886, located 22 miles west of Lincoln, something to hang its hat on.

"From what I understand and what I observed, it did a lot as far as just bringing the town together to have something to be proud of," he said. "In reality, we're a bedroom community, and a lot of our patrons go many different ways. This is something to come home to and get everybody focused on one thing within the town. There was a great deal of pride, and rightfully so. It was quite an experience." NSA



Kyle Hingst, a three-year starter for his father at quarterback, isn't old enough to remember Milford's first state playoff appearance in 1979.

Videotape Review

This Video has a Familiar Sound

GAME OF THE CENTURY
by Husker Video
$25

Just hearing Lyell Bremser's voice again is like hearing from a long lost friend. It all comes back to you, the excitement, the anticipation of another Nebraska football game. Bremser had a way of making every game – whether it was Iowa State, Kansas State or Oklahoma – sound like its outcome hinged on every down, every pass and every tackle.

With the introduction of Warren Swain as the new "Voice of the Huskers," the timing of the release of this 92-minute video, which chronicles one of the most storied games in college football history, couldn't be better.

This tape is nearly as much about Bremser as much as it is about Johnny Rodger's punt return, Jack Mildren's two-pass scoring drive for Oklahoma just before the half and Jeff Kinney's game-winning touchdown run. With Swain's introduction and the departure of his successor, Kent Pavelka, being able to hear Bremser call a Nebraska football game is to remember what all future broadcasters are measured against.

Husker Video president Mike Osborne, the son of Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne, said he stumbled across an audio copy of the broadcast while visiting his parent's house. Melding the greatest game in Husker history with the greatest voice Husker sports has ever known was too good an opportunity to pass up, Osborne said. So with the permission of the Bremser family, Osborne's company edited the broadcast to match the video.

The quality of this tape is about what you would expect from film shot in the early 1970s. Like most Husker Video productions, footage of the game was culled from coaches game film, which is, at times, of substandard quality.

This particular tape, however, is unique because it has been matched with actual broadcast-quality play-by-play. Many of the other Nebraska football videotapes sold by Husker Video contain no audio at all or are incomplete.

Because actual game film was used to put together much of this tape, photos of players and Bremser are interspersed between plays to fill the gaps when the camera was not running. This is one of this video's few drawbacks.

This tape is definitely worth purchasing, if only for the thrill of hearing Bremser shout one more time: "Holy Moly! Man, woman and child. Did that put 'em in the aisles!" NSA

— Sean Weide

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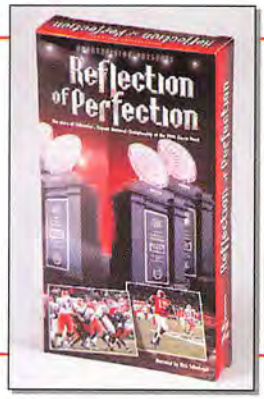

REFLECTION OF PERFECTION

by HuskerVision

$25

Don't be misled by the title of this video.

This tape is not a review of the entire 1995 national championship season. It centers only on the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl and includes no highlights or recap of any regular season games.

Produced by HuskerVision producer/director Jeff Schmahl and his staff, this 70-minute tape goes behind the scenes with the Huskers during their stay in Tempe. Because HuskerVision is a division of the university, it has the unique advantage of being the only video crew allowed into team meetings, the locker room and the team hotel. You'll see players playing tennis at the team hotel, horsing around at the pool and praying in a shower room in the Sun Devil Stadium locker room.

That's what makes this tape so special. You see video here that you won't see anywhere else. Hearing Osborne address his team at halftime as the players sat shoulder pad to shoulder pad in the locker room is a stirring moment: "This should be our half. We should get stronger, we should hit harder. We should make things happen this half more than we did the first half."

Said rush end Grant Wistrom in an interview: "I've never seen Coach Osborne so fired up to win a ball game. It was incredible."

It's also refreshing to hear from assistant coaches such as Milt Tenopir, Ron Brown, Dan Young, Craig Bohl and Tony Samuel, whose accomplishments often are overlooked.

Ironically, Husker defensive coordinator Charlie McBride even correctly forecasts the conditions that brought Nebraska's 19-0 loss at Arizona State this season.

Said McBride: "You hope that the players don't let up. You can get to a point where you start think you're pretty good. When you get to that point, that's probably the point where you're going to fall apart."

Adding to the quality of this tape is Memorial Stadium public address announcer Rick Schwieger, who narrates with a deliberate style that doesn't overshadow the pictures.

Schmahl and his crew save the best video for the end by editing in post-game locker room interviews and slow-motion highlights of the biggest moments of the game: Tommie Frazier's run, Jamel Williams' sack, Lawrence Phillips' touchdown. NSA

— Sean Weide

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A New Attitude

Eric Francis

Sophomore Ed Thompson switched from wide receiver to quarterback to run UNO's offense. The Mavs' five wins in their first six games vaulted them to second in the conference standings.

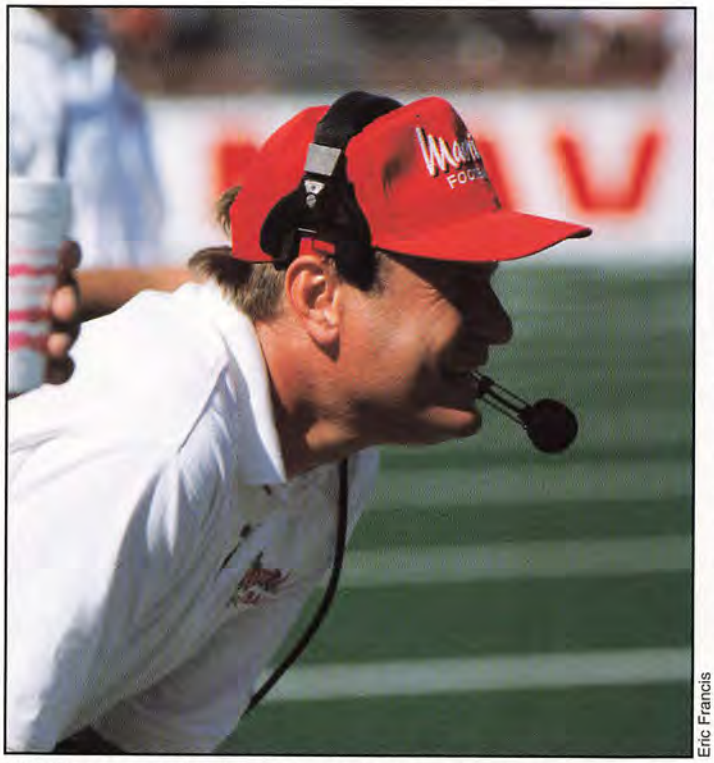
UNO football, following the Lady Mav volleyball team's example, has found a way to win

By Dave Mollner

There's a new address for the University of Nebraska at Omaha football team — and it's no longer the cellar of the North Central Conference. These days, UNO football fans will find the Mavericks residing among the conference leaders.

The Mavericks, who finished last season 3-8, knocked off No. 1-ranked North Dakota State in September 24-21 in the Fargodome before a crowd of more than 16,000 Bison fans, a feat UNO had not accomplished since a 14-7 win dating back to 1940.

After winning six of their first seven games, the Mavs now approach the gridiron with an entirely different attitude.



Eric Francis

Third-year coach Pat Behrns saw potential in this year's team.

"Last year, we weren't sure if we could win the games, but we knew we could come close," said Ed Thompson, a former all-state quarterback at Cambridge, Neb.

"This year, we know we can win some games and I think that's made a big difference."

Another obvious difference between former coach Tom Mueller's program, which went 12-31 in four seasons, and current coach Pat Behrns' is in the recruiting process.

Behrns and his staff are coming off two of the best recruiting years ever for UNO football, with more than 30 high school all-state selections on this year's squad. Although the Mavs start only one senior on offense and three on defense, they're ranked among the nation's leaders in rushing behind an offensive line comprised of three redshirted freshmen and two juniors.

"I think the biggest change since last year is in our level of personnel, because there's such a big difference when you've got 300-pound guys in the weight room getting stronger and faster as opposed to 250-pound guys," Behrns said.

"We undoubtedly have better players and that's a tribute to our coaches and our program in the job they've done recruiting over the last three years. And when these young men are making big plays on the field like they have this season, you've got a chance to win regardless of who your opponent is."

But this season, the football team isn't the only successful UNO program — the women's volleyball team has grabbed some of the limelight.

Ranked as high as second in the NCAA Division II's Top 25 poll, the Lady Mavs won their first 20 matches playing in the powerful NCC, which at one point posted seven of its 10 members in the national poll.

After finishing 22-9 last year with four sophomores and one junior in All-American candidate Amy Steffel, the 1996 Lady Mavs returned without last year's lone senior — middle blocker Denise Otten, who gained second-team All-American honors and set a school record with a .421 hitting percentage.

Steffel, the team's new leader and only senior, said the Lady Mavs are approaching each game as a step toward their common goal of a national title.

"I like the fact that everyone's totally committed this year, from staying around this past summer for conditioning instead of going back home, to the maturing process we've undergone, where we're not letting the little things hurt us like in the past," said Steffel, UNO's all-time set assist leader.

"We're really getting through that and we're a real team this year and I think everybody's got a stake in what's on the line and everybody cares."

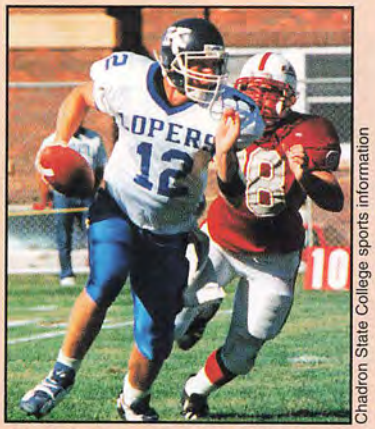
Coach Rose Shires said although Otten's presence is deeply missed on the court, this year's squad has kept its focus.

"Although we only lost one player off last year's team, it was a great loss. But now Denise is a part of our coaching staff and will help our success continue," Shires said.

"But this team now, those four sophomores from 1995 are juniors with at least a full season of playing time and a couple have started since they were freshman.

"This is one team on a direct mission to win a national championship." NSA

Nebraska Small College BRIEFS



Chadron State College sports information

Chad Rutar and UNK couldn't run from Chadron State this year.

A half-century of frustration ended for the Chadron State College football team when it defeated the University of Nebraska at Kearney 14-10 Sept. 28.

Not since 1948 had the Eagles defeated Kearney in football, snapping the Lopers' 32-0-1 undefeated string in the series.

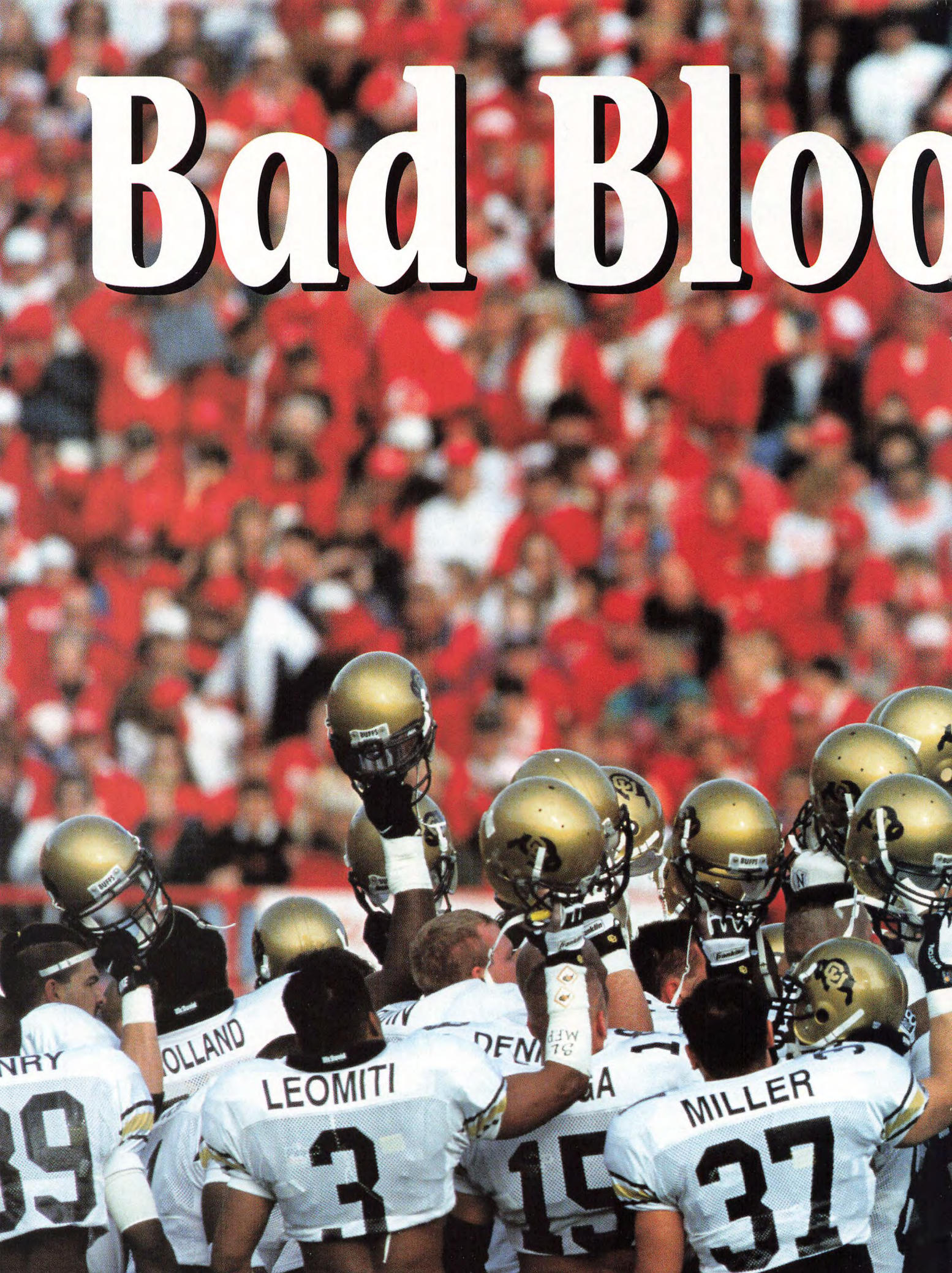
■ ■ ■

Nebraska Wesleyan University inducted three new members into its Athletic Hall of Fame Oct. 19. They were:Ted Bulling, football, track (1981); Laura (Girmus) Cleveland, volleyball (1986); Steve Harris, golf, basketball (1978).

Hastings College inducted seven former athletic standouts into its Athletic Hall of Fame Oct. 12: Becky Chramosta-Ehrhorn, basketball (1989); Benny Congrove, football (1969); Kim Cook-Nelson basketball (1988); Dusty Kohl, tennis (1972); Mike Schmitz, football (1985); Laddell Whitey Sieckmann, basketball (1950); Dennis Sullivan, football (1985).

The University of Nebraska at Kearney inducted four new members into the Kearney Athletic Hall of Fame Oct. 12: Dayle Fitzke, athletic services; Dan Moore, cross country, track (1966); Bill Roach, tennis (1977); Jill Stenwall, track (1980).

Bad Blo



od Rising

Step aside Oklahoma. Nebraska's new rival wears black and gold.

By Anthony Flott

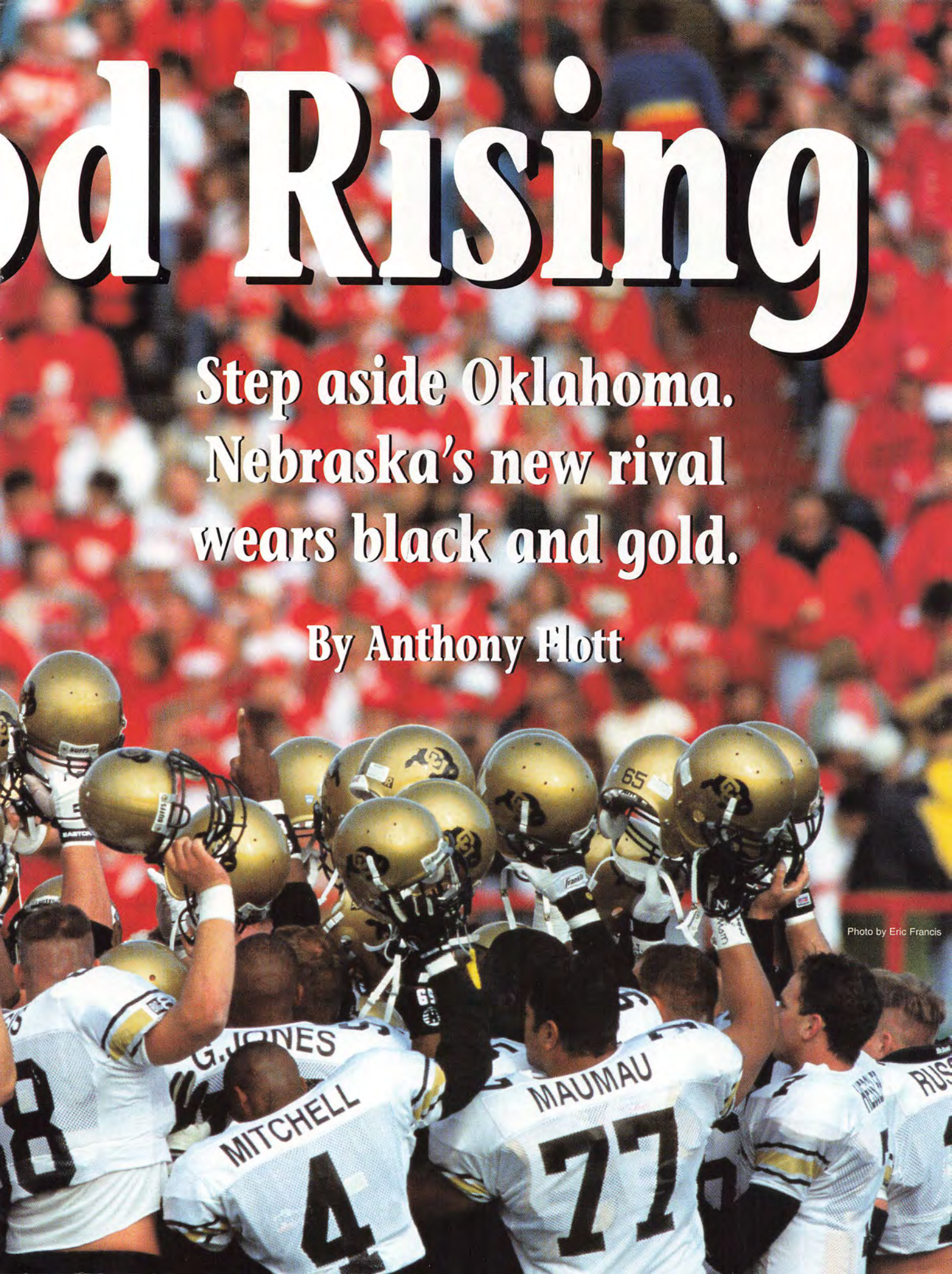
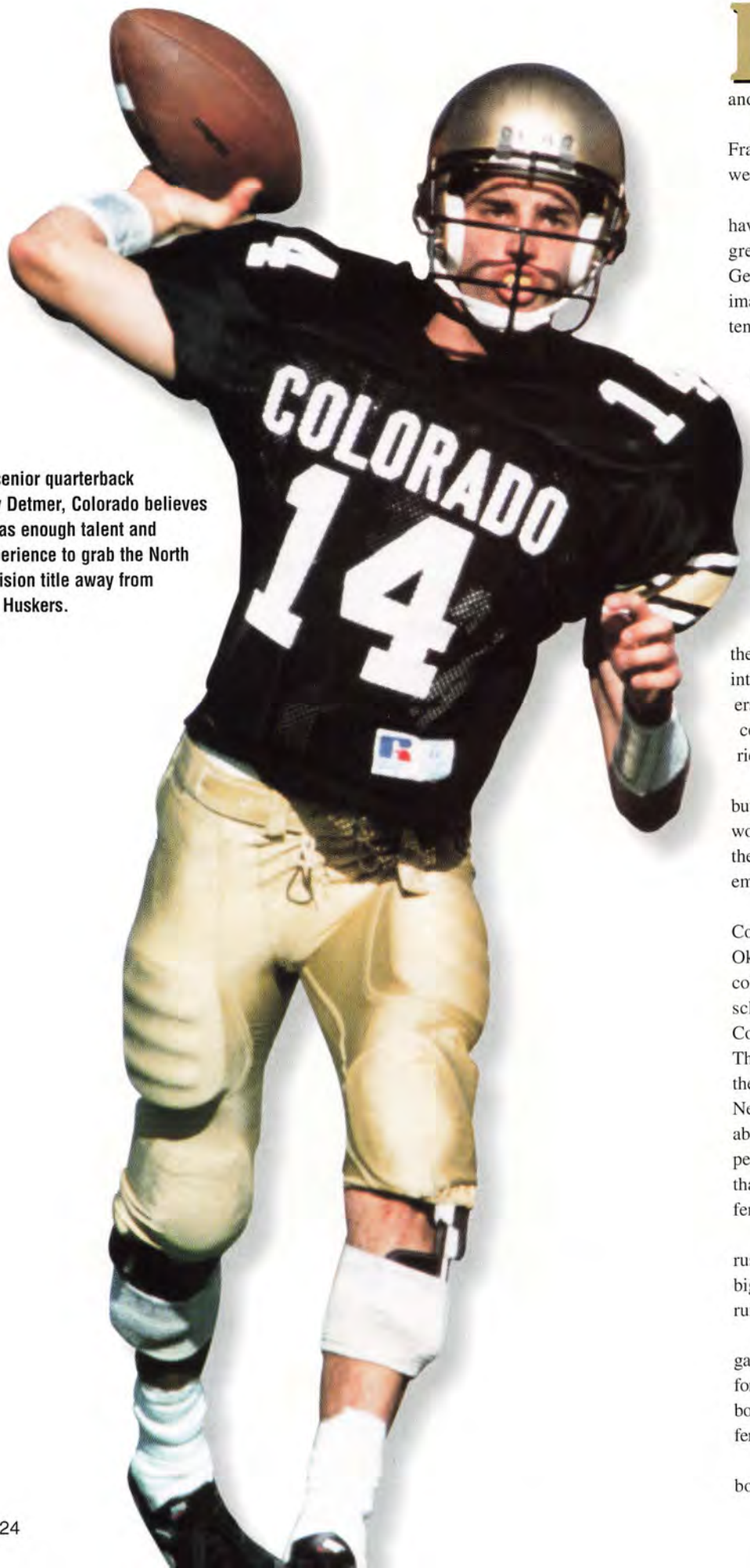


Photo by Eric Francis



In senior quarterback Koy Detmer, Colorado believes it has enough talent and experience to grab the North Division title away from the Huskers.

Like epic boxing matches, great college football rivalries are defined by their give and take. Their push and pull. Their ebb and flow.

In the boxing ring, shadows of the Ali-Frazier bouts linger 20 years after fists were lowered.

Heavyweight clashes on the gridiron have similar renown. Mention some of the great ones — Michigan-Ohio State, Georgia-Florida, USC-UCLA — and images of battles long past, but not forgotten, flood back in a wave of tradition.

For much of the history of the Big 8 Conference, it was the annual Oklahoma-Nebraska showdown that supplied the fireworks. This was rivalry epitomized, the teams that gave us the "Game of the Century" with three decades still to go.

And more often than not, it wasn't just Big Eight goodies at stake. Seven times since 1970, the winner of the game went on to wear the national crown.

But that rivalry has gone the way of the Big Eight and Sooner Magic — vanished into the crisp autumn air. Conference mergers and bowl alliances have reshaped the college football landscape. The great rivalries are being downsized in the process.

Sure, Nebraska and Oklahoma still play, but the series has lost its appeal. The teams won't even play each other in 1998. Now there's a new rivalry — with a new league — emerging on the horizon.

Administrators of the new Big 12 Conference saw this coming long before Oklahoma started playing like a bad junior college team. The would-be king makers scheduled appropriately, assigning the Colorado-Nebraska series to the day after Thanksgiving for the next three years. That's the slot usually reserved for the Oklahoma-Nebraska game. Fans moaned and groaned about the loss of tradition, but that disappeared long ago. It's Nebraska and Colorado that have won or shared the last eight conference titles.

"It didn't bother me at all," Nebraska rush end Grant Wistrom said. "This is the big game now and emotions have tended to run higher for the Colorado game lately.

"When we take the field an hour before game time, the stands are usually empty. But for the CU game the stadium is filled and everybody's ready to go. The atmosphere is a lot different because there's usually a lot on the line."

It will be no different in 1996. Should both teams continue their winning ways

Bob Berry

The Huskers have found the best way to stop a quarterback is to blitz with linebackers such as Terrell Farley (No. 43) and Jon Hesse (No. 44).

after early season stumbles, the nationally televised Nov. 29 showdown in Lincoln will decide the North Division title of the Big 12. The winner advances to St. Louis to take on the South Division champ for the conference title and a spot in the Sugar, Fiesta or Orange Bowl.

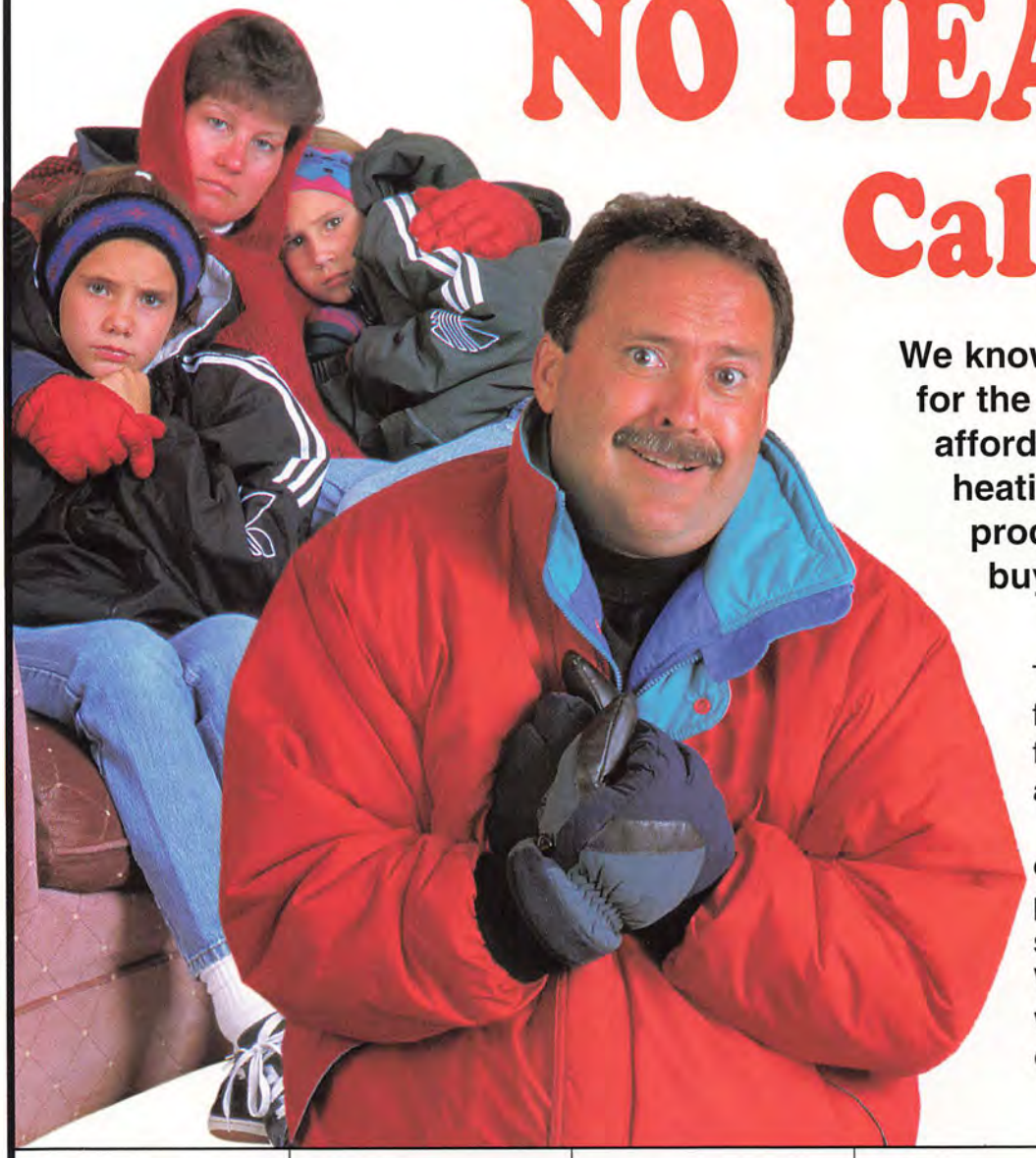
But it's clear that both teams are thinking only of spending New Year's Day in New Orleans as one-half of a national title matchup. First, however, they must do battle the day after Thanksgiving.

"There's going to be a million fat people sitting in their chairs in front of the television watching that game," Colorado linebacker Matt Russell said.

As the horizontally-challenged nestle into their recliners, Russell will settle into an even more comfortable place — right in the middle of the Buffalo defense. The spot fits the 6-foot-2, 245-pound middle linebacker even better than a favorite chair.

Entering his senior season, Russell was listed as a preseason All-American and the favorite to win the Butkus Award as the nation's top linebacker. Since stepping onto the field in 1993, he has played in more than 40 straight games, been in on nearly 2,000 plays and recorded almost 350 tackles, many of them of the bone-jarring variety.

NO HEAT?? Call Us!



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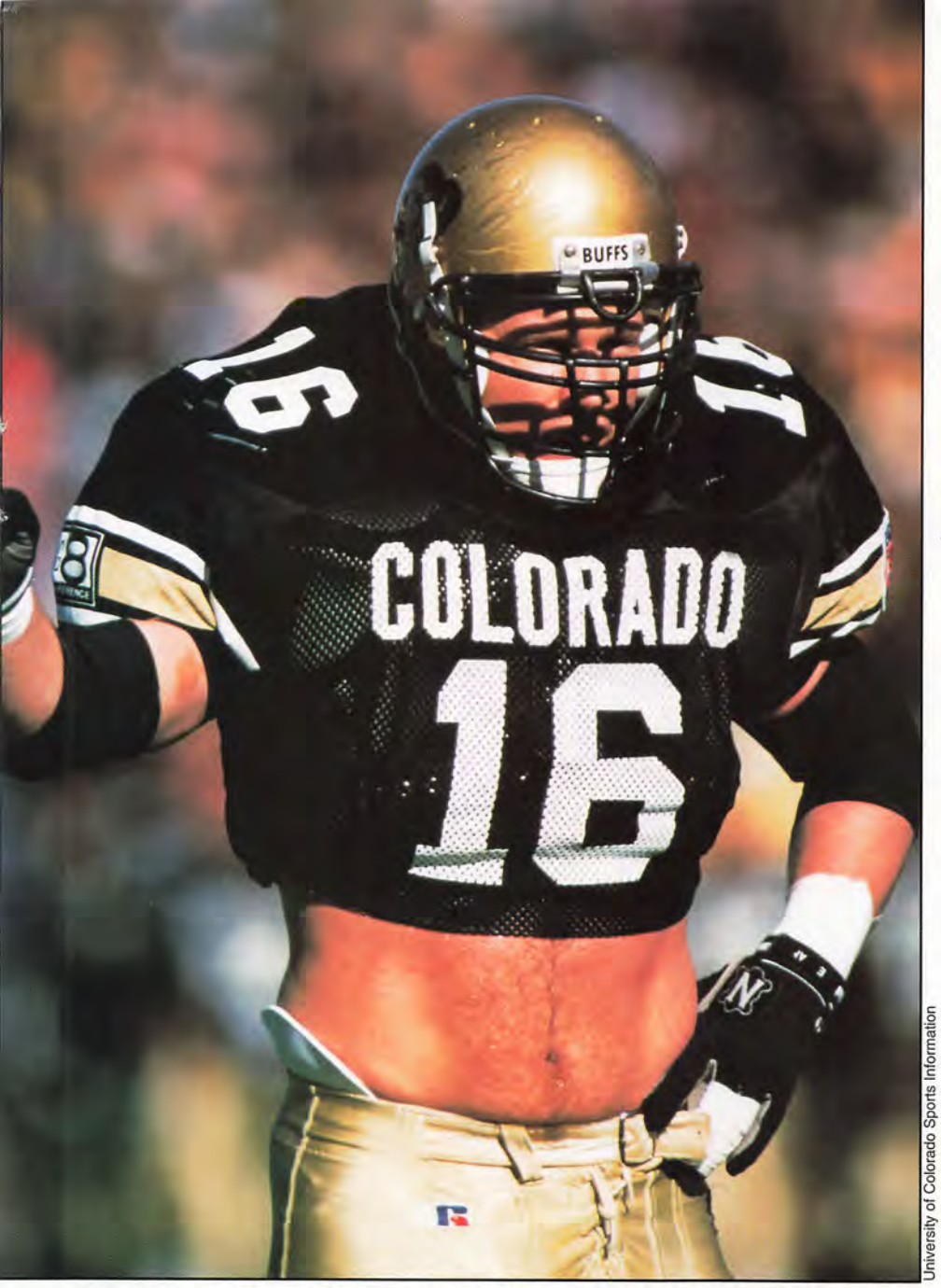

University of Colorado Sports Information

Butkus Award candidate Matt Russell said he's grown tired of losing to the Huskers. "It would be a crying shame for the rest of my life if we don't beat them this year."

Russell was born to be a middle linebacker. His father, Phil, was a defensive end at Baylor. His brother, Randy, was an outside linebacker at Arkansas. Matt Russell will finish his career as one of CU's all-time greats.

But the honors and accolades cannot fill a void that will remain empty if the Buffaloes lose Nov. 29.

"We've never beaten Nebraska since I've been here," said Russell, who was born in Tokyo, where his father was stationed with the U.S. Air Force. "It would be a crying shame for the rest of my life if we don't beat them this year. We've beaten everyone else in the Big 8, but it will really leave a kind of scar on the seniors' careers if we don't get it done."

Russell and his fellow seniors likely will finish 1996 as the winningest class in CU history, eclipsing the mark of 39 wins set by the 1992 squad. The 1992 Colorado seniors, however, posted two wins, a loss and a tie in four meetings with Nebraska.

Russell can't be blamed for CU's recent woes against the Huskers. He had 13 tackles in last year's 44-21 loss and 18 in 1994's 24-7 setback. He also played in the 21-17 defeat in 1993 and was a redshirt when the Buffs were shellacked 52-7 Halloween night 1992.

For four years, the CU-NU rivalry has been less like Ali-Frazer and more like Ali-Jerry Quarry (Ali KO in 7).

"The last four years, they've just been a little better," Russell said. "A little bigger, a little stronger, a little faster. And they've executed a little better. Of course, Tommie Frazier had a lot to do with it."

It's not as if Colorado has been void of talent. Last year, for example, the Buffaloes went into the game ranked seventh. The year before, the Buffs had what some consider to be their best squad ever — even better than the 1990 national champions.

The teams went into the 1994 game flip-flopped in the polls at Nos. 2 and 3, but few gave Nebraska much of a chance because magic man Tommie Frazier was on the sideline with a blood clot in his leg. Colorado, meanwhile, was clicking on all cylinders with current NFL stars Kordell Stewart, Michael Westbrook and Rashaan Salaam.

Final score: Nebraska 24-7. Colorado finished 11-1 and ranked third.

"That was the worst," Russell said. "We were ranked higher in one poll and everyone counted Nebraska out. We weren't cocky, but we felt we were the best team in the country. We were shocked, embarrassed."

CU hasn't tasted success against Nebraska since 1991 — a 19-19 tie. That marks Colorado's only blemish in their last 23 November games, a streak they intend to keep alive this year. The Buffaloes also hope to improve on their 20-0 mark in the final regular season game when advancing to a bowl.

But if the Buffs are to do so, they must exorcise the ghosts.

Though many now consider Colorado-Nebraska to be the new league's best rivalry, the series has been a decidedly one-sided affair, with the Huskers holding a 38-14-2 advantage. From 1968 to 1985, NU peeled off 18 straight wins by an average score of 37 to 11.

It wasn't until Bill McCartney came to Boulder in 1983 that the tide began to change. The story now is often told: McCartney targeted the Huskers as the Buffs' biggest rival, highlighting the game in red, but forbidding players and fans to don the hated color during game week. In just his third game against Nebraska, McCartney's tactic paid off as the Buffaloes stunned No. 5-ranked Nebraska 20-10 in Boulder.

The Huskers did it again in 1989 (27-21) and 1990 (27-12), the latter win coming in the Buffs' national championship season. But it's been all Nebraska in the '90s.

Defensively, both teams line up in the 4-3. But offensively it is a contrast in styles. Nebraska pounds away with the triple

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Eric Francis

Ralphie the Buffalo won't make the trip to Lincoln for this year's game.

option, while Colorado attacks through the air. It's the Mountains vs. the Plains.

"They have a real effective scheme," Russell said. "And their offensive line is so quick they can finesse you better than anybody else. Don't get me wrong, they're awfully big and physical, but they are also a finesse line. They get that ball out on the perimeter and there's nobody out there a lot of the time.

"As a defensive player, that's tough to fight through. You're on one blocker, you get off and there's another one on you. You get off him and then you've got a little wide receiver cracking back on you."

Colorado's offense, led by quarterback Koy Detmer, is just as tough to defend, Wistrom said.

"I'm not sure how we stack up," said the 6-5, 250-pound Wistrom. "But we're a good defense and they're a good offense, so I'm sure it will be an intense battle.

"Colorado is as big as they come and as fast as they come. There are really no weak links. They've got a great quarterback, good running backs, a good offensive line. There are no weak spots you can focus on."

Though Colorado has lost the last four games, they have been effective at times against the NU defense. Good enough, in fact, to be mimicked by Arizona State.

"Colorado likes to spread the field out and use their speed, and they do a lot of schemes against us," Wistrom said. "Arizona State used a couple of their plays, zone running plays. They adopted it from CU and it worked well. We weren't prepared to see that."

Neither team was prepared for what transpired early in the season. Colorado fell to Michigan 20-13 and Nebraska was knocked from its No. 1 perch with a 19-0 debacle against ASU.

At the time, both squads figured they were out of the running for the national title. But both have bounced back nicely, trouncing the rest of their opponents while teams ahead in the polls fell away.

These are two teams that know how to handle adversity, how to win. From 1989 to 1995, Nebraska posted the second-best record in the country behind Florida State, going 73-11-1 (.865). Colorado is fourth at 68-13-4 (.824)

"The way things are unfolding now, both teams have a good chance of playing for the national championship if teams keep losing like they are," Wistrom said. "But we'll be playing hard regardless of the records.

"We could both come into the game 0-9 or 0-10 and it's still going to be played like the national championship is on the line."

It may well be. Should the NU-CU winner go on to take the Big 12 title and finish the regular season ranked first or second, it would advance to the Sugar Bowl for a national championship game.

"A lot of things have to fall our way," Russell said, "but we can run it out in the Big 12 and play in New Orleans. We don't have control over other teams. We can only control whether or not we win or lose."

Of course, there's that Nov. 29 hurdle to clear first. NSA

TOM OSBORNE VS. COLORADO

Year	Winner	Score
1973	Nebraska	28-16
1974	Nebraska	31-15
1975	Nebraska	63-21
1976	Nebraska	24-12
1977	Nebraska	33-15
1978	Nebraska	52-14
1979	Nebraska	38-10
1980	Nebraska	45-7
1981	Nebraska	59-0
1982	Nebraska	40-14
1983	Nebraska	69-19
1984	Nebraska	24-7
1985	Nebraska	17-7
1986	Colorado	20-10
1987	Nebraska	24-7
1988	Nebraska	7-0
1989	Colorado	27-21
1990	Colorado	27-12
1991	Tie Game	19-19
1992	Nebraska	52-7
1993	Nebraska	21-17
1994	Nebraska	24-7
1995	Nebraska	44-21

Eric Francis

Two years ago in Lincoln, Brook Berringer played the best game of his career to lead the Huskers to a 24-7 win over the Buffaloes.

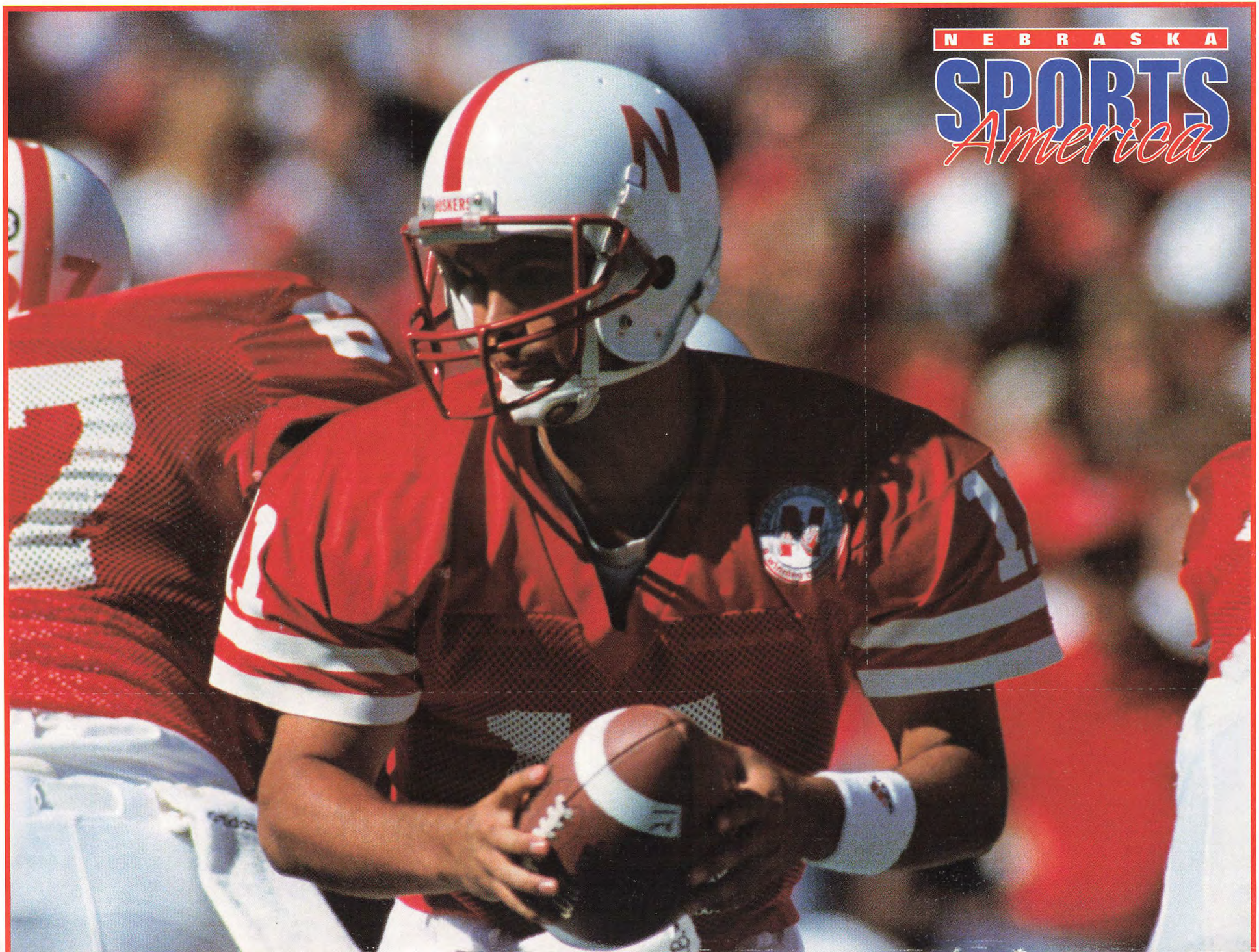
THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY

Oct. 25, 1986 — 20-10 loss in Boulder
Colorado never trailed in defeating Nebraska for the first time since 1967. The Buffaloes celebrated by leaving the Folsom Field scoreboard on for two days.

Nov. 4, 1989 — 27-21 loss in Boulder
Colorado scored on a 70-yard run by J.J. Flanigan — who took a pitch from Darian Hagan 30 yards downfield — and held off two late Nebraska scoring threats.

Nov. 3, 1990 — 27-12 loss in Lincoln
Eric Bieniemy ran for four fourth-quarter touchdowns to erase Nebraska's 12-0 lead. The Huskers were held to minus four yards of total offense in the final quarter.

Nov. 2, 1991 — 19-19 tie in Boulder
Byron Bennett's 41-yard field goal on the final play was blocked as snowballs flew from the stands. Nebraska rushed for 112 yards, less than a third of its nation-leading average, in bone-chilling conditions.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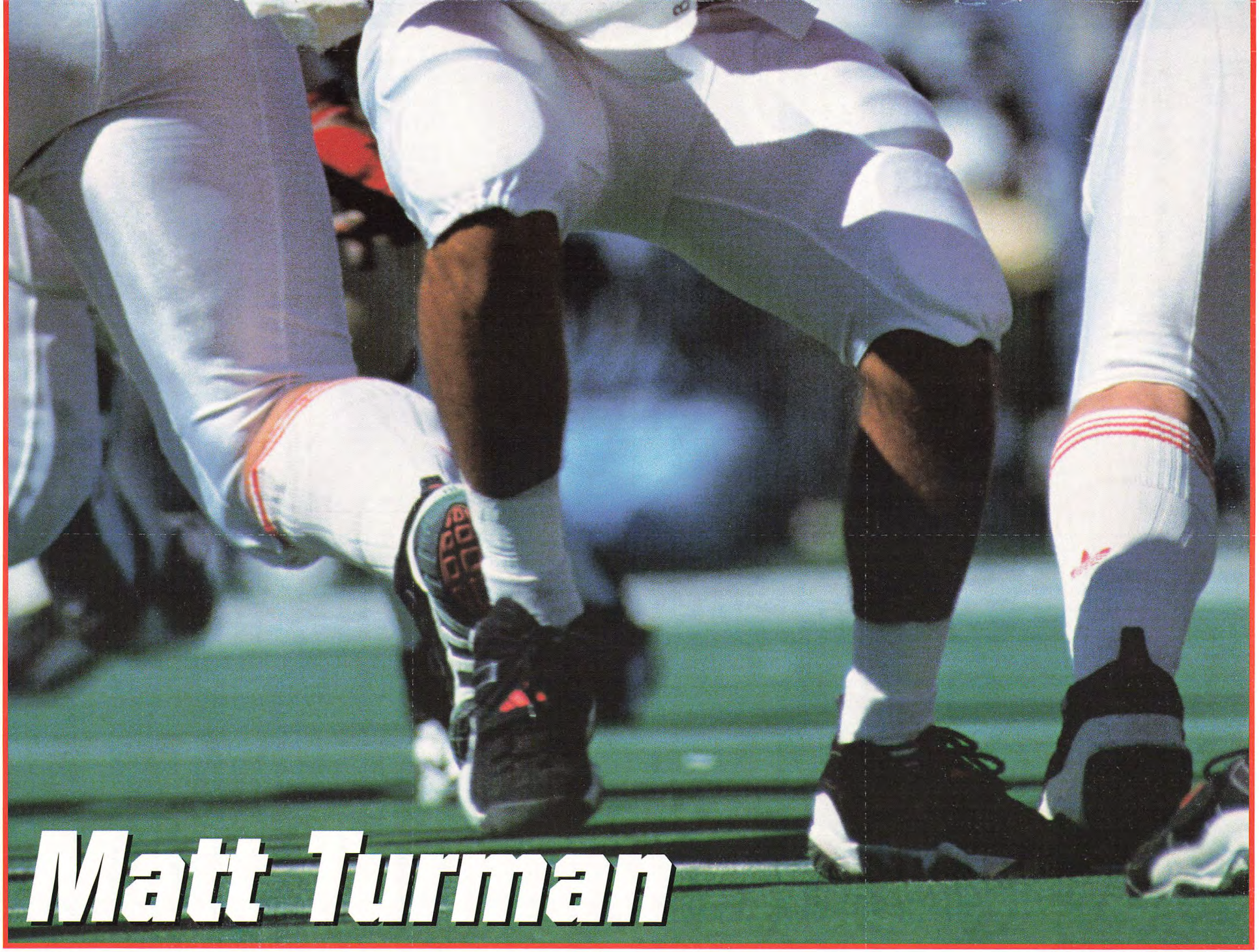


Matt Turman

Photo by Bob Berry

Between THE LINES

BY JOHN KNICELY

A Success Story Gone Sour

Take a good look at the unusual training shoes pictured on this page. What you see is a dream that literally never got off the ground. It stems from one of the numerous sports advertisements we often see that promise amazing athletic results in just a few short weeks.

Years ago, it was the muscle man transformed from the skinny wimp who was constantly bullied on the beach. Later came the guarantee of improved mental prowess through self-hypnosis tapes designed to release the champion pent up inside.

These days, it's a magazine ad trumpeting the fact that small frys are now dunking basketballs simply because they've been training with the newest concept in workout shoes.

That ad caught my eye last year while thumbing through one of my son's prep digests and I whistled about the astounding claims of seven-inch improvement in vertical jump. Someone in the house must have heard me.

Imagine my surprise the following month when I opened a mysterious Christmas package and found a pair of the so-called Strength Shoes inside. I whistled again.

Obviously, my curious family wanted to see if those shoes could work some middle-aged magic, but it was somewhat disconcerting to learn they hedged a bit on their investment in this grand experiment. Closer inspection revealed that the shoes were actually second-hand. Apparently some other aspiring jumper had been hooked by the ad and fizzled a short time later in discouragement. The only consolation must have come from recouping a portion of the steep price tag by pawning the shoes.

But retreads or not, I was determined to give the new winged sandals a try. Included in the box was a workout plan designed to move the beginner to advanced jumping proficiency. What it didn't offer was a discreet location to perform the silly workouts. One doesn't just show up down at the local YMCA and run around wearing tennis shoes that someone easily could mistake for models of the Starship Enterprise. Especially someone my age.

Fortunately, the work place at WOWT includes a small training room in the basement, which is usually deserted between evening newscasts. So it was behind that door that I strapped on the Strength Shoes and followed the routine of treadmill sprints, jump ropes and kangaroo hops across the room.

My motivation each night was simply to get the workout finished before anybody wondered through the door and saw me making a fool of myself. Much to my chagrin, that happened on more than one occasion. You should have seen the incredulous looks from the two guys on the cleaning crew when they saw me tiptoeing around wearing those funny looking tennis shoes.

I decided no explanation was necessary. My hope was to meet them by chance one day in a pickup basketball game and let my power rebounds do the talking.

Well, a funny thing happened along the way to my seven-inch improved vertical jump. It turns out my Strength Shoes weren't strong enough. As I was racing full speed on the treadmill one night, I began to notice a clip-clop sound with every other stride. Before I knew it, the platform on my right shoe was precariously dangling every time I pushed forward with my foot. The workouts came to an abrupt end and haven't resumed since.

For now, my dream of playing above the rim hinges on two things. One, if the super glue will hold on the broken shoe and, two, if I'm willing to risk further embarrassment in the workout room (at this point the station refuses to install a lock on the door).

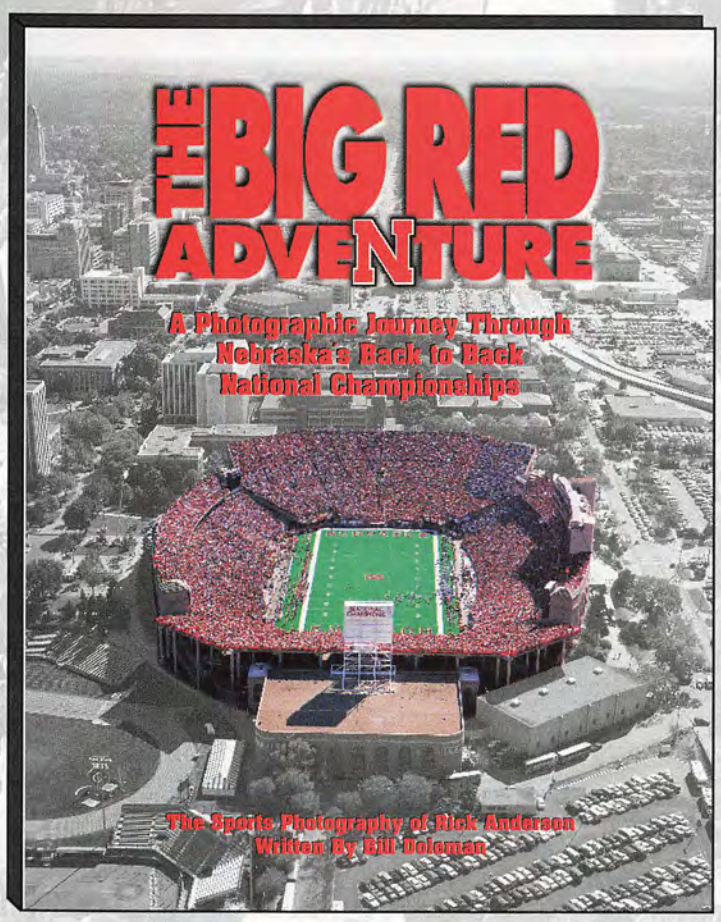
Eric Francis

A broken shoe means we may never know if these really work.

In the meantime, with Christmas on the horizon I've started sending a new message to my family. Every time one of those "ab roller" commercials pops up on TV showing the guys with washboard stomachs, I start whistling. I wonder if anybody is listening. NSA

John Knicely co-anchors the 6 and 10 p.m. newscasts on WOWT in Omaha.

Nebraska Photographer Rick Anderson Presents: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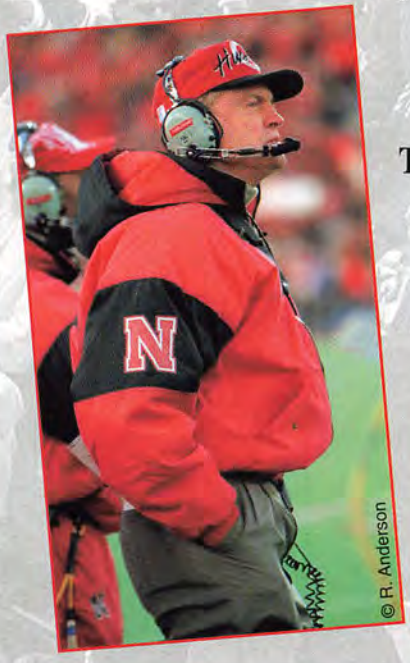

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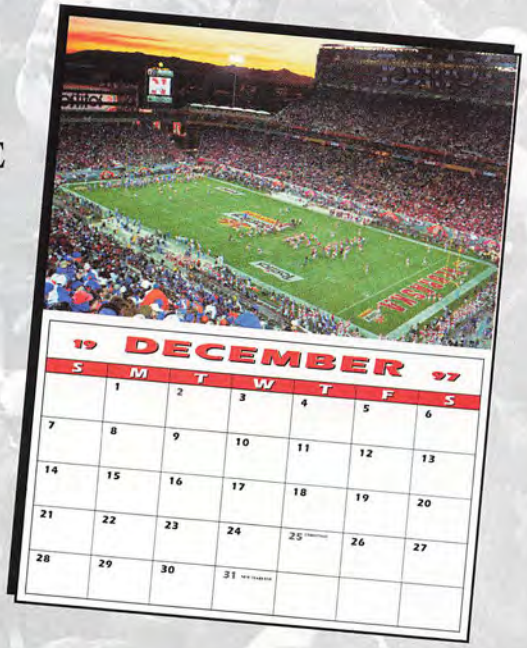

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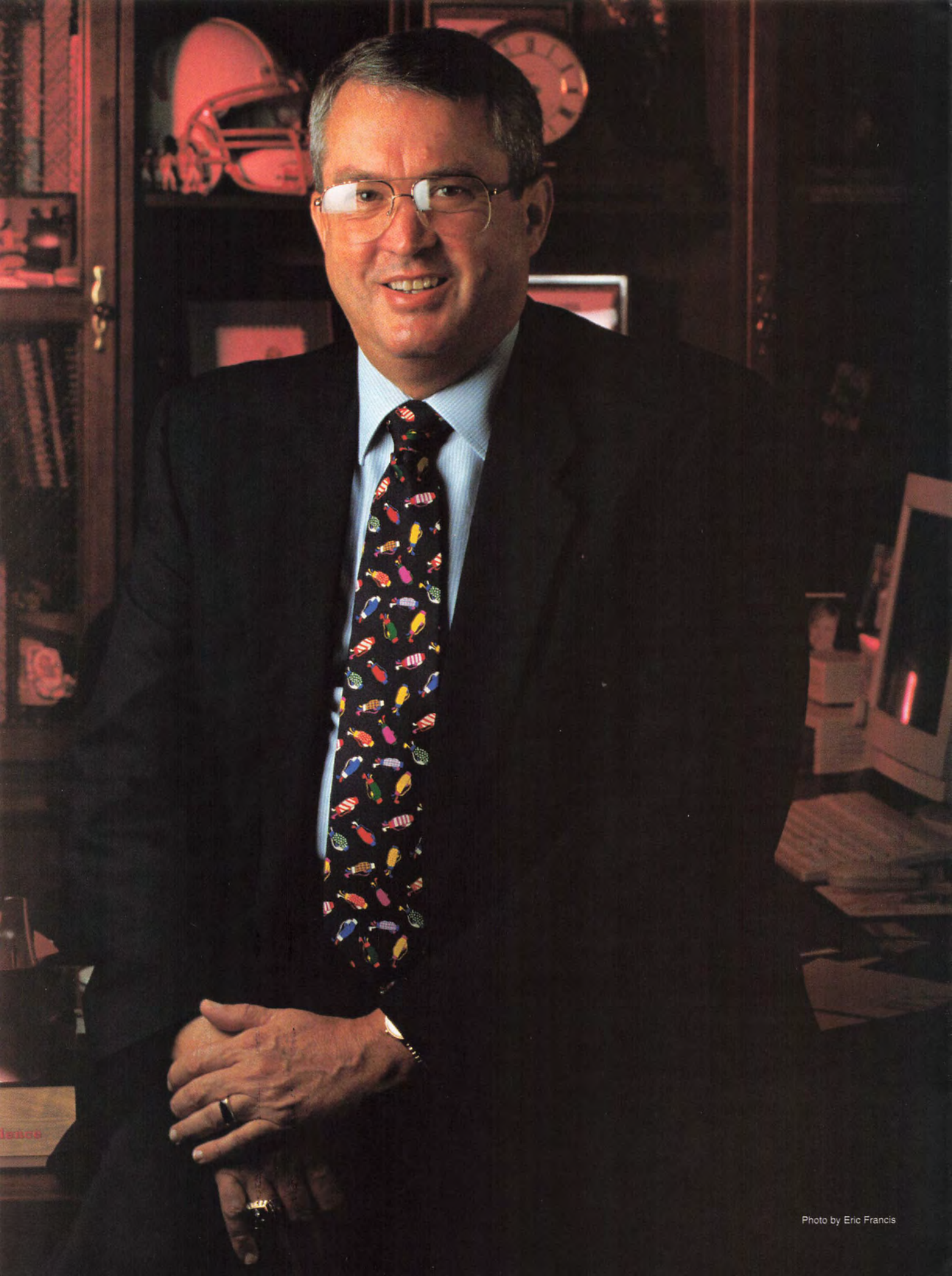

Photo by Eric Francis

His OWN Man

Without hesitation, Bill Byrne has redefined Husker athletics.

A conversation with... Bill BYRNE

When Bill Byrne was hired in 1992 as University of Nebraska athletic director, he had some big shoes to fill. And that's the understatement of the day.

Byrne, who came to Nebraska after a successful stint at the University of Oregon, needed to be strong enough to bolster the athletic department's sliding financial standing (a $2.4 million deficit and losing about $1 million a year) and at the same time not alienate the core of boosters who would be relied upon to carry the Big Red budget back into the black.

Byrne had a surprise for people. He had no intention of filling Bob Devaney's shoes. He brought his own, and they are the shoes of a dedicated fan and marketing wizard who has left his mark on Nebraska athletics in a short time. All 22 sports the department offers show vitality, if not outright success, In the competition away from the fields of play — the competition for booster and marketing dollars — he has been an unequivocal success.

Admittedly, he tried to fire Herbie Husker. And while the football players have been world beaters between the lines, some of them have earned failing grades in deportment. One almost expected to see one of those signs on the wall in his office reading "This department has gone (fill in the number of days) days without a public relations disaster."

But Byrne is unwavering in his commitment to carrying his department to new levels. His marketing and fund-raising expertise, while ruffling a few red feathers, is allowing the university to go forth with major facilities renovations, and the deficit is as forgotten as the football team's frustrations of being unable to win a national title under Tom Osborne.

Byrne took time to answer a few questions for Nebraska Sports America, and makes no apologies for any of the moves he has made.

NSA: If someone had your job for a day, what would surprise them?

Byrne: The variety. The things we deal with. I have a sense sometimes by some of the questions I am asked that people think that the most strenuous part of my job is rolling balls out to make sure the coaches have enough things to do during practice. When in reality, on a typical day, I'll deal with media, attorneys, various proposals from corporations, with donors, with ticket holders, with student athletes, with coaches. Right now we're dealing with architects and engineers on some facilities, went to lunch with a state senator — that's a pretty typical day.

NSA: The athletic department was $2.4 million in debt when you took over and now you are running in the black. How has the budget increased since you've been here, and how has the windfall from winning the two national football championships changed things?

Byrne: The budget was $16 million when I arrived, and now it is $26 million. We would be a Fortune 500 corporation, with excellent growth and good long-term earnings potential. What it has allowed us to do was to take advantage of some plans we'd already put into place regarding the sale of licensing products. We hadn't been very aggressive prior to my arrival here in the sale of licensed products. But we aligned ourselves with the collegiate licensing corporation, which is something like college level of NFL Properties, and we've been very aggressive. We've consolidated our forms, consolidated our logos, consolidated our colors, because prior to my arrival there were all sorts of 'N's, and reds, and all kinds of different looks. Now, when you see officially licensed products, you're going to see at least a standard color in almost everything you see out there. We've been very aggressive in trying to market new 'looks' for Nebraska, trying to be out there on the cutting edge when it comes to new products and have them available for our fans. We've pushed ourselves from coast to coast as far as dealings with people like Sears, J.C. Penney, and some of the national marketing firms like Kmart and so forth to make sure our products were available.

NSA: Nontraditional sources of income, such as lotteries, can give public entities like schools a false sense of security — Hey! Look at all this money! The increased revenue from the sale of merchandise associated with the two football championships is a

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similar windfall — do you have to guard against that?

Byrne: I wouldn't call it a windfall. It's something that we worked hard to generate. And one of the things we've worked very hard at is trying to position ourselves like a Michigan or a Notre Dame, who have, whether their teams have been successful or not, been successful with licensing. You're seeing us do that. We're moving into that type of viewing by people. This year, take Sports Illustrated for example, you're going to see Nebraska featured (in their advertising). We've targeted those things. We've sent representatives to the trade shows, and we have all that out there. We've positioned ourselves with our look, to be out there so that young people are interested in it. We work hard at this. So our goal is, though our teams may falter every now and then, we will still be among the top five or so in the sale of licensed products.

NSA: Nebraska has 11 sports available for both men and women, are there any changes ahead?

Byrne: We're looking at the possibility of adding additional women's sports as we need to meet demand of the students, and so indeed have analyzed that, but I'm not prepared to say what they are at this juncture, but we're very conscious of that. We want to meet student demand, and right now we offer every sport that is offered in the high schools in Nebraska.

NSA: How are the skyboxes selling?

Byrne: They're doing great, but what we do with this is a project that has to go before the regents, so our position is that we're not going to talk about numbers or anything until the regents hear about it first. They would prefer to hear about it from us rather than read about it in the newspaper or a magazine.

NSA: What is the current state of athletic department donations?

Byrne: It was about $1.5 million when I got here, and this year we are anticipating $5.5 million.

NSA: Do you think that is something else which goes along with winning two national championships, kind of a bandwagon of "I want to be part of this?"

Byrne: Actually, we've had a plan to try to increase contributions in the program. That's a systematic program, and we'd have been there whether we won the national championships or not.

NSA: A sport other than football at Nebraska could easily feel neglected. We asked one head coach at Nebraska that if he could post an anonymous gripe about anything to you, what would it be. The response was that you deserved all the credit in the world for treating each sport equally, regardless of its national ranking or budgetary status. How do you keep them all happy?

Byrne: I don't know if they are all happy, but we try to pay attention to them all. I have a philosophy that athletics are a large family, a large team, and that you pay attention to all your family members. You try to treat them all with the same love and affection. And so I work hard at doing that and I try to instill that in our administrative staff so they know what's going on, and that our coaches feel like they have a voice in what they are doing here, and that what they are doing is important to us — because it is. And our athletes, all 700 of them, we love every one of them and they are all equally important to us. So maybe that's why they feel good about it, because we do pay attention, and I guess I've always done it that way.

NSA: Do you like your job more than you thought you would?

Byrne: I love going to work every morning, I love the coaches and I love the athletes and I love the staff because they keep me young. That's what my goal was when I got into athletic administration, to be an AD, and I was lucky enough to be an AD at a very young age. At 38, I was one of the youngest athletic directors in the country at a major college program.

NSA: You knew you were coming into a program that received extraordinary fan support.

Byrne: I knew that, and that was one of the reasons Nebraska was appealing, because of that level of support. It's not greater than I expected. I anticipated this.

NSA: When you instituted the donor program that went along with season tickets, there was a certain amount of disgruntle-

Bob Berry

Byrne is quick to point out that he hasn't always made the most popular decisions, but he has made good ones.

ment, but nobody was giving tickets back. With basketball, there were people who gave their tickets back.

Byrne: Not many, not nearly as many as we anticipated — about 15 percent. That has come back, but where I think we're going to have a problem this year is the continuing problem with student ticket sales. We have seen a decline in student attendance prior to my arrival here, and it is continuing. Until we won the two national championships in football, we saw a decline in student attendance in football. My first year here we only had 6,500 students, and in a school of 25,000 or 26,000, that's unbelievable that only a quarter of the student body would do something like that. We're heading up to 8,500 now for football, but for basketball we're still only around 1,500 to 2,000 students. First of all, the demographics have changed. Students are no longer coming in as freshmen and graduating four years later. We've got a lot of students with part-time jobs — a large number of single parents, who don't have time to come to the contests because they are studying or have a job or are they have a child. The demographics of the student body has changed enormously. Another reason is that at Nebraska, there were a lot of people who financed their way through the university by selling their tickets. We now require photo ID, because with student tickets we want students to sit in the seats.

NSA: Replacing Bob Devaney was impossible. How do you think public perception of you has changed?

Byrne: First of all, I didn't come in here with any intention of replacing Bob Devaney. I've said that. I can follow Bob, but I don't think anyone can ever replace him. I'm not going to ever try to be Bob Devaney, I'm just going to try to be Bill Byrne. My strengths are that I think I can bring some organizational skills to the department, and some fund-raising, and perhaps some visions for the future that are different than what we've had here in the past. I've tried to capitalize on those things. I think that our fans have seen that some of the changes that I've suggested are working out reasonably well. There was a great deal of criticism when I told people we were going to put in a new sound system and big screens. There were letters to the editor about what a damn fool that Byrne is and he's wasting our money and we don't need them and we haven't used them before — and then they saw them for the first time and all of a sudden people are saying 'Wow! That's pretty neat!' They like it, and you can hear the public address announcer for a change. When Section 14 collapsed, people couldn't understand why I would bring in a structural engineering from out of state as well as one from in-state. But once they learned that when the Hyatt Regency collapsed in Kansas City and killed all those people, and when the (Los Angeles) Coliseum was in the earthquake, or Candlestick Park, or when the Big A collapsed in Anaheim, they were called in. I wanted to bring in somebody who was experienced with sports structures as well as a local construction firm. And when people found that out, they said, 'Well, that's OK.' There's always antipathy, or seems to be in this state, to any type of change, and to bring outsiders in here to tell us how to do our business.

Eric Francis

Byrne stays in touch with his staff and other schools via an in-office switchboard phone and electronic mail.

NSA: How thick of skin do you have to have?

Byrne: A good athletic director is 90 percent scar tissue. We're kind of like Red Sox fans. I'm not saying criticism doesn't sting, but one of the things is you have to have enough self-confidence in what you are doing, and know the direction that you're going. There are always going to be critics out there, but if you've had enough experience and done your research properly and made quality decisions, then what you are doing is the correct thing to do.

NSA: Who do you bounce things off of before you make a decision?

Byrne: I have a group of good friends here in the state and some out of state that I talk to who are all good Nebraska fans, and when I've got significant issues to discuss, I talk with them. I also meet regularly with our senior administrative staff and I try create and atmosphere with our senior staff that

nothing is off limits. They can bring up anything and they can criticize anything behind closed doors. But once they leave the room, we are all going the same direction. If you talk to our staff, I think they will tell you that they can say anything on any topic to me and I won't bite their head off.

NSA: How is the Big 12 looking?

Byrne: I think it's going to be good. We're learning to work with each other and trust each other. To put people from different cultures together takes awhile to meld them all. We come from very competitive positions in the Big 12 Conference, and we're trying to build areas of trust with each other. I feel we're getting there.

NSA: What about the possibility of a grass surface for the football field at Memorial Stadium?

Byrne: Well, we have an artificial surface right now that we like, and I don't see the need to go to a natural grass field as far as within Memorial Stadium. We do have the need for additional grass practice fields. We have one-and-a-half (fields) out there right now and there simply isn't enough space, and yet we've got track and baseball there. So as part of our long-range plans, we'll likely be moving baseball and track around to accommodate three full-size practice fields near the stadium. In fact, that's part of where the revenue will be going that will be generated by the skyboxes.

NSA: Tell me a small victory that no one would know about that you've accomplished.

Byrne: Keeping (volleyball coach) Terry Pettit here was a small victory. He has had a number of opportunities to go other places and we've kept him here. He's an extremely valuable portion of our athletic department, a wonderful coach and a terrific human being. It's not a small victory, it's a big one, but not many people know about it.

NSA: The department is under a microscope, and the benefit of being under a microscope is that the good things look really good. But the bad things look really bad. Do you ever wish you'd wake up one day and the football team would have a 5-6 record and everyone would leave you alone?

Byrne: Oh, I would never wish we were 5-6. I tell my friends back in Oregon and Idaho where I grew up that one of my goals about coming to Nebraska, and I say this as a joke, is that I want to be an arrogant winner. I used to say that at Oregon when we were 2-9 (in football) and 7-20 in basketball. And I like winning, I guess I'm a very competitive person — and I like to win, I don't care what it is, and I will go out of my way to try to win. I won't cheat, but I'm a very fierce competitor. I understand that the microscope comes with the job. Sometimes I wish we were in a little larger community where I could be just a little more anonymous.

NSA: Grade yourself on what you've accomplished since you came to Nebraska.

Byrne: Given what it was like when I took over here and where we are now, I think I've done a very good job. I think that there have been significant changes within this department that have given our coaches and athletes a chance to continue to win. I think we are keeping pace with the rest of the nation and in many areas we are a step ahead, and I want to continue that. NSA

— Richard Egan

Arizona State 19, Nebraska 0

TEMPE, Ariz. — The streak is over, the unthinkable has happened, and there is an unfamiliar number on the right side of the hyphen in the record.

The Nebraska Cornhuskers have fallen — but they can get up.

In a tiny room in the catacombs of Sun Devil Stadium, Coach Tom Osborne and some of his players tried to explain what had happened on the Bermuda grass turf outside.

Arizona State's defense recorded a school-record three safeties and Jake "The Snake" Plummer passed for 292 yards and a touchdown as the 17th-ranked Sun Devils ended the nation's longest winning streak and handed top-ranked Nebraska its first shutout in 23 years with a 19-0 shocker on Sept. 21.

"We always said that if we lost a game, it would have been because we beat ourselves," said senior rush end Jared Tomich. "That's what happened tonight. I tried not to think about it. I didn't think it would come."

But it did, and Tomich said the team will regroup.

"It's not the end of the world," the 1995 All-American and co-captain said. "The bumps and bruises hurt a lot more now than they have the past two years, but we'll start practice again on Monday and go from there."

The Cornhuskers fell from No. 1 to No. 7 in the USA Today/CNN poll. They had won 26 straight games and 37 in a row during the regular season en route to back-to-back national championships. But they were unable to keep the Arizona State defense away from junior quarterback Scott Frost.

The Sun Devils dominated the game, outgaining Nebraska 401 yards to 226 while racking up their three two-point safeties, more than Nebraska had given up in an entire season.

The loss brought tears to Green.

Nebraska	0	0	0	0	—	0
At Arizona State	9	8	0	2	—	19

ASU – Keith Poole 25 pass from Jake Plummer (Robert Nycz kick)
ASU – Ahman Green fumbles ball out of end zone for safety
ASU – Nycz 27 field goal
ASU – Ball snapped out of end zone for safety
ASU – Nycz 44 field goal
ASU – Scott Frost tackled in end zone
Att. – 74,089

Nebraska 65, Colorado State 9

LINCOLN — Reports of Nebraska's demise have been greatly exaggerated. Just ask Colorado State.

The two-time defending national champion Huskers rebounded from last week's 19-0 ambush by Arizona State with a resounding 65-9 win on Sept. 28 before a crowd of 75,575at Memorial Stadium.

Twice, the Huskers blocked kicks.

"Before the game, I didn't know what was going to happen," Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne said. "I was pleased with the way we responded." In their final non-conference game of the season, the 2-1 Huskers posted more than 600 yards of total offense while the defense held Colorado State's rushing game to 59 yards and slightly more than 300 yards of total offense.

"That's a good football team to hold to nine points," Osborne said. "I thought we played a pretty complete game."

It was a day of redemption for the Huskers, who seven days ago suffered their first loss in 27 games, and especially for the offense and junior quarterback Scott Frost, who was the target of much of the blame.

Frost, making his third start against the Rams, rebounded well from last week's "Disaster in the Desert" by completing 13 of 18 passes for 143 yards and two touchdowns.

"It was a pretty tough week," Frost said. "Some things were said that hurt our pride. I'm as proud of this team for bouncing back today as I was of them for winning the national championship last year."

Colorado State	0	6	0	3	—	9
At Nebraska	7	17	20	21	—	65

NU – Vershan Jackson 3 pass from Scott Frost (Kris Brown kick)
NU – Damon Benning 19 run (Brown kick)
CSU – Geoff Turner 32 pass from Moses Moreno (kicked failed)
NU – Frost 4 run (Brown kick)
NU – Brown 27 FG
NU – Sheldon Jackson 1 pass from Frost (Brown kick)
NU – Brian Schuster 15 run (run failed)
NU – Green 1 run (Brown kick)
CSU – Matt McDougal 27 FG
NU – James Sims 2 run (Ted Retzlaff kick)
NU – DeAngelo Evans 30 run
NU – Shevin Wiggins 43 punt return (Retzlaff kick)
Att. – 75,575

Nebraska 39, Kansas State 3

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne wasn't sure what to expect. What he received was a pleasant surprise.

"I was unsure which was the real team, the deal in Arizona or the team we thought we had," Osborne said. "Now, I feel real good about the future of our team."

The proof came in the form of a 39-3 domination of previously unbeaten Kansas State in Nebraska's first Big 12 Conference game Saturday afternoon. It was the Cornhuskers' second impressive victory since a shocking 19-0 loss at Arizona State Sept. 21.

A partisan purple-clad crowd of 43,915, the third-largest in KSU Stadium history, watched in disbelief as the smothering Cornhusker defense limited the Wildcats to 86 yards in total offense, including zero yards in the first half. The result was NU's 28th straight victory in the series, and KSU Coach Bill Snyder was left shaking his head.

Nebraska had the Wildcats on the run.

"What we saw, we've seen in the past," he said. "What they did, they did very well. What we did, we did very poorly."

The defense and kicking game were the most impressive as the Huskers, ranked sixth in the CNN/USA Today poll and seventh by Associated Press, improved to 3-1 overall. K-State, ranked 12th and 16th, fell to 4-1.

"Obviously, our defense played one of the finest games they've ever played," Osborne said. "I have to give our defensive coaches credit. They had a good concept, and the players executed it. And the kicking game was a huge factor. We probably picked up 10 to 14 points there."

Sophomore Kris Brown kicked field goals of 45, 37, 28 and 50 yards in the first half to help Nebraska to an 18-3 lead at halftime.

Nebraska	6	12	14	6	—	39
At Kansas State	0	3	0	0	—	3

NU – Kris Brown 45 FG
NU – Brown 37 FG
KSU – Jamie Rheem 51 FG
NU – Ahman Green 8 run (pass failed)
NU – Brown 28 FG
NU – Brown 50 FG
NU – DeAngelo Evans 69 run (Brown kick)
NU – Vershan Jackson 21 pass from Scott Frost (Brown kick)
NU – Evans 5 run (Brown kick)
Att. – 43,915

Nebraska 49, Baylor 0

LINCOLN — Damon Benning admitted he had an uneasy feeling before the Huskers' game against Baylor.

A week earlier, he'd watched on television from Lincoln as his teammates dominated Kansas State.

"I was really uneasy before the game," Benning said. "It didn't seem like me. I didn't know if my coming back would interrupt continuity or what. I just took a deep breath, relaxed and focused myself on the game."

The senior I-back, who had been sidelined with a groin pull, started in place of the injured Ahman Green and fit in quite nicely, rushing for 136 yards and three touchdowns as fourth and fifth-rated Nebraska romped past Baylor 49-0 before a homecoming crowd of 75,478 at Memorial Stadium.

The Big 12 Conference victory, Nebraska's third since a 19-0 shocker at Arizona State, left the Huskers 2-0 in the conference and 4-1 overall. The Bears fell to 0-2 and 3-2.

Benning didn't have to wait to find out how he'd fit in the Nebraska offense. The co-captain carried on the first four plays from scrimmage and six of the first seven. He rushed for 43 yards on the opening drive that ended with a missed 49-yard field goal by Kris Brown, who hit four of five the previous week.

"Coach (Tom) Osborne showed a lot of confidence in me," Benning said. "I got the ball early and often. They had confidence in me to go ahead and start me, and that made me feel good."

Not scoring on the opening drive proved to be only a momentary setback, as the Huskers found the end zone on their next four possessions.

Benning scored on a 1-yard run, freshman backup DeAngelo Evans scored from 6 and 11 yards out, and Benning found paydirt again from 18 yards as the Huskers out-yarded the Bears 405-28 in the first half in building a 28-0 lead.

Baylor managed only 32 yards rushing.

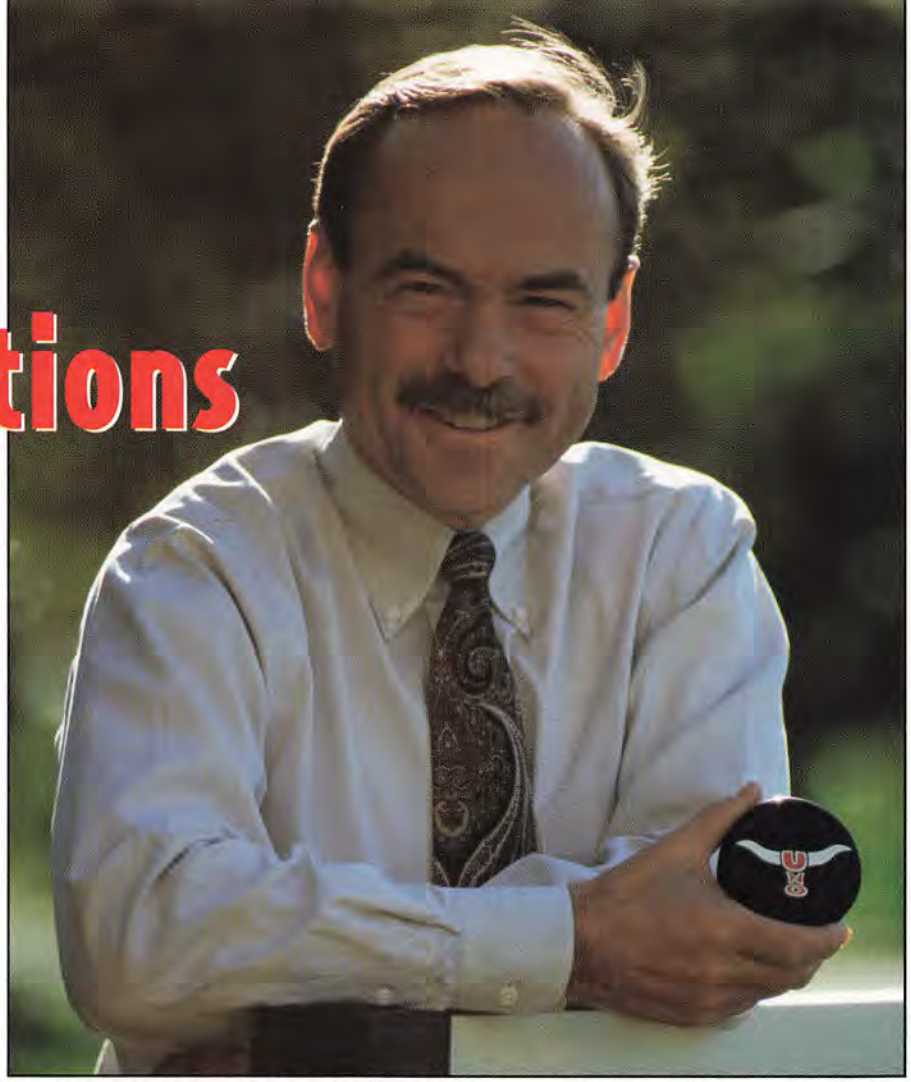
Baylor	0	0	0	0	—	0
At Nebraska	7	21	14	7	—	49

NU – Damon Benning 1 run (Kris Brown kick)
NU – DeAngelo Evans 6 run (Brown kick)
NU – Evans 11 run (Brown kick)
NU – Benning 18 run (Brown kick)
NU – Benning 5 run (Brown kick)
NU – Frost 13 run (Brown kick)
NU – Matt Turman 45 run (Ted Retzlaff kick)

No Need for Introductions

Without lacing a skate, UNO hockey already is the hottest ticket in Omaha.

By Kevin Warneke



Eric Francis

Twenty years after first being asked to coach UNO hockey, Mike Kemp finally gets his chance.

Call Omaha a two-hockey team town.

For years, Omahans have loved their Lancer hockey. The United States Hockey League team has sold out every game at Ak-Sar-Ben Coliseum since the 1989-90 season, while consistently contending for the USHL crown.

In May, University of Nebraska at Omaha athletic director Don Leahy announced there would be a new kid in town. UNO was starting a hockey program that soon will battle the NCAA Division I powerhouses.

Leahy's explanation of why UNO needed a hockey team was simple: The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has football; Creighton University has its men's and women's basketball teams.

"Our students deserve their place in the sun."

Omaha hockey fans apparently agree. Leahy didn't need to wait long to learn what kind of response his announcement would bring: the ringing of telephones gave him his answer.

The UNO athletic office received requests for 500 season tickets before the May 1 announcement. The day after the announcement, the list had grown to more than 1,000. Just 16 days later, season ticket sales were stopped at 6,390. A waiting list contains requests for 3,000 more tickets.

Add the 1,000 tickets held back for students, 500 for corporate sponsors and another 500 reserved for single game sales, and the Mavericks are likely to perform before sold-out Civic Auditorium crowds the first time they take the ice.

That means Mike Kemp — hired in June to lead the Maverick hockey program — can focus all his energy on building a winner. "I inherited a good situation."

No kidding. Kemp realizes he's in an enviable position. He credits Leahy and UNO Chancellor Del Weber for raising the UNO program from an idea to a reality.

"My staff and I deserve no credit for anything that's happened to this point," the former Wisconsin Badger assistant said. "Now, it's up to us to carry forth."

That means UNO victories. Kemp said he hopes hockey fans will be patient, which in coach-speak means fans can expect some losses. He reminds them that UNO will be playing in the best collegiate hockey conference in the country. History and the statistics support Kemp's claim. The Western Collegiate Hockey Association has:

- produced such National Hockey League stars as St. Louis Blue Brett Hull and New York Ranger Mike Richter. Last year, 55 WCHA alumni played in the NHL.
- won 29 national championships since the conference was formed before the 1951-52 season. Twenty-five conference members have finished second in the national tournament.
- produced nearly 160 first-team All-Americans and more than 140 Olympians.

"People have to understand we're moving into what is the highest level of hockey at the college level — from ground level," he said. "And, we're going to jump from there into that mainstream."

Kemp said he expects UNO to need several years to work its way into the middle of the WCHA pack. It won't be easy. Take Alaska-

Anchorage, which entered the WCHA in 1993 and remains among the conference also-rans. St. Cloud St., which has had hockey for decades, is another example. The Huskies moved up to Division I several years ago, but remain in the lower division of the WCHA.

"This is not an easy conference to compete in," Kemp said.

Minnesota and Wisconsin traditionally are in the upper division, Kemp said, with North Dakota, Michigan Tech, Denver, Colorado College fighting for the remaining spots. "We have to find a crevice to sneak through and make our way to the upper level."

If Kemp looks familiar that's because he is. Twenty years ago, Kemp decided joining the family oil distribution business in Minnesota could wait. UNO wanted him to turn its club team into an NCAA Division II program.

Kemp never got his chance. Before the 1976-77 season began, UNO decided that college hockey would have to wait. Twenty-three recruits would have to find other places to play and Kemp had to break the news. "That was a really humbling experience."

Kemp had a decision to make: He could go home to the family business or he could find another place to coach. The oil distribution business could wait. Twenty years as an assistant had Kemp worried.

"More than anything else you second guess the path you chose. You wonder if you're going to be pigeonholed — he's a career assistant."

Not any more. Fast-forward 19 years and UNO was looking for a new athletic director — its fifth in 10 years. Weber suggested Leahy return for his second stint as UNO top man in athletics. Among the new athletic director's priorities would be starting a Division I hockey program.

Not everyone cheered the announcement. The critics, including a University of Nebraska regent, had their say. UNO's football and men's basketball teams had floundered in recent years. Shouldn't UNO jump-start those programs first?

In the end, it was hard to argue with requests for more than 6,000 season tickets. Those are the people Kemp wants on his side.

"We are blessed with a hard-core hockey community, people who are longtime hockey fans who appreciate the game. They love the game. They love just being in the rink. Those are the kind of people who stand behind you come hell or high water. That's what you need to make this program work."

At first, expect Kemp to field a team of mostly freshmen. He hopes to blend some upperclassmen — transfers from other programs — into the mix.

While the Mavericks will be green, Kemp pledges that they'll play fundamentally sound hockey. They'll be strong on defense — Kemp's forte — and never boring on offense.

"When we move into the offensive part of the game, we'll try to be as creative as possible." NSA

Keeping Their Distance

Call it a long-distance relationship.

One of Mike Kemp's first priorities as UNO's new hockey coach was to contact Omaha Lancer general manager and coach Mike Hastings. He realized that building a solid relationship with the Lancer administration was a must.

"It's a real asset for us to have the Lancers here."

Down the line, Kemp said, he could see the Maverick squad stockpiled with former Lancer players. When his Wisconsin Badgers won the 1990 national championship, about half the team had played for the Madison Capitols, a former USHL team.

Kemp said he regularly talks with Hastings and hopes the two teams can cooperate on such things as scouting reports.

If Kemp wants to become a Omaha Lancer fan, he'll have to keep his distance. NCAA rules restrict Kemp and his staff from seeing the Lancers play more than four times a season.

"The NCAA rules are quite clear on the matter," he said.

Eric Francis

The Civic Auditorium, Omaha's downtown sports arena, has a new look — inside and out.

Civic Auditorium Receives a Makeover

Hockey fans will be at home watching the UNO Mavericks in Civic Auditorium.

"With 8,000-plus seats, its going to be a great place to watch hockey," said Greg Peterson, city planner. "The sight lines are excellent."

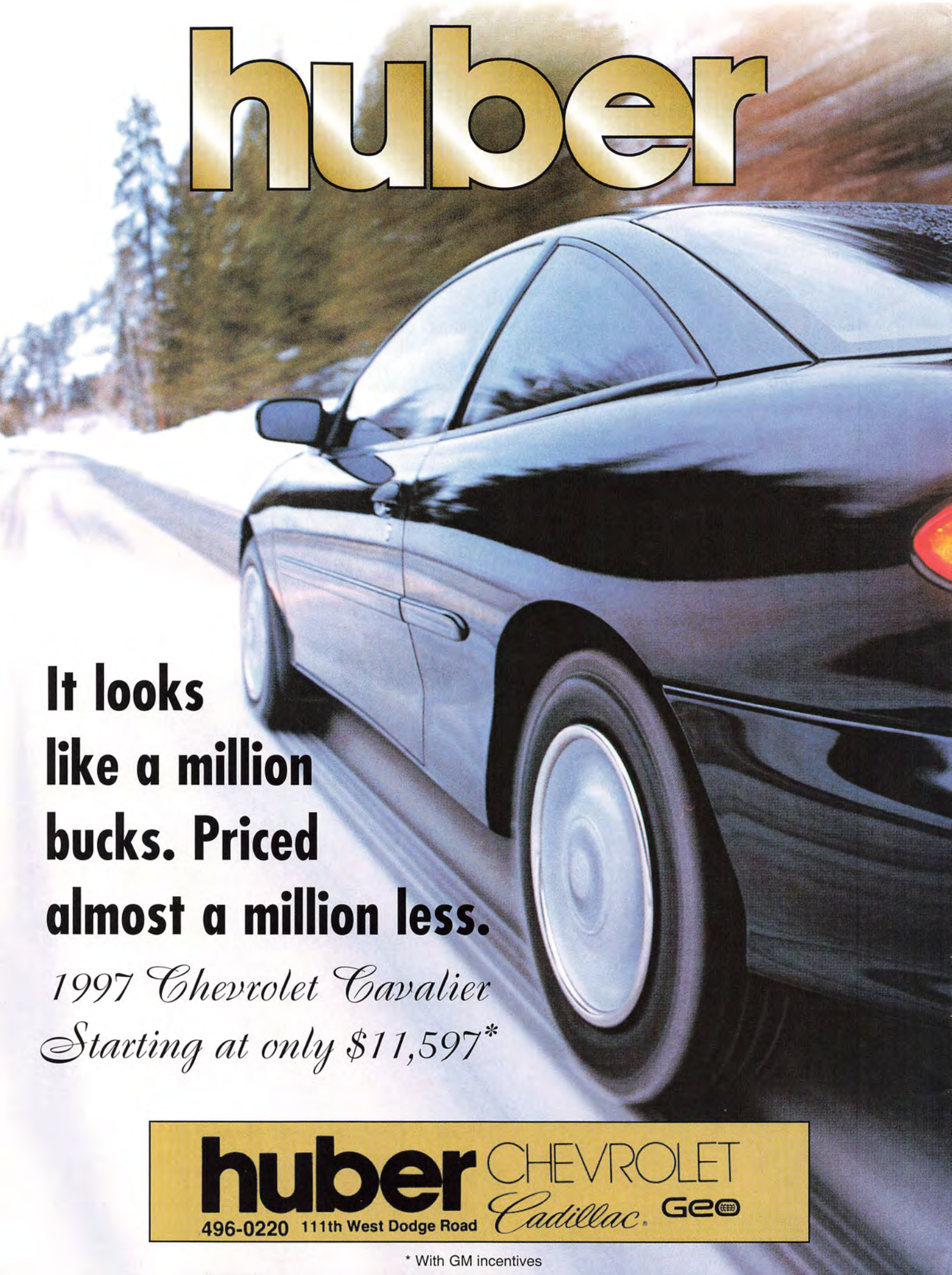
In less than 12 months — when the auditorium's $22 million overhaul is complete — UNO will take the ice in style.

"Basically the building on the inside is being gutted," Peterson said. "People are going to be surprised at the extent of the work."

In the plans are rest rooms, concession stands, meeting, storage and office space, hockey and basketball locker rooms and even space for the zebras. Also part of the project is a 454-stall parking garage on the west side of the auditorium.

Last to be installed — when the 1996-97 basketball season and other special events are over — will be the ice.

Funding for the project will come from a seat tax, city funds, an appropriation from the Legislature from cigarette taxes and revenue from the parking garage.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Nebraska Notes

Linebacker **Jon Hesse** was named a Burger King National College Football Scholar Athlete of the Week Oct. 19 . . . The **Husker men's basketball team** will have just nine scholarship players (four below the NCAA limit) when it begins its regular season Nov. 23. Of the nine, four have no collegiate playing experience . . . Cross country runners **Jonah Kiptarus** and **Cleophas Boor** — both natives of Kenya — finished 1-2 at the Auburn and Minnesota Invitationals . . . **Lindsay Eddleman** and **Kari Uppinghouse** established new single-game point records during the women's soccer team's 10-2 win over Colorado. Eddleman and Uppinghouse each scored seven points on three goals and an assist . . . Olympic champion **Penny Heyns** may be gone but the women's swim team still returns two All-Americans in senior **Julia Russell** and junior **Janet Danburg** . . . For the men's swim team, **Juan Benavides**, a senior from Madrid, Spain, is back to attempt to duplicate his sweep of the 50, 100 and 200 freestyle events at the conference meet last season.

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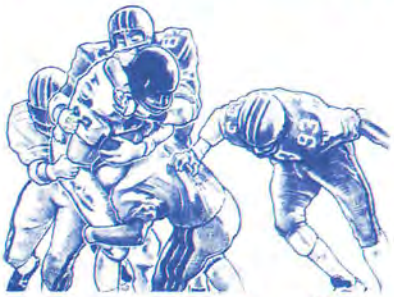

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Counties of the Cornhuskers

Monte Christo, who wears No. 9, appropriately hails from Kearney High School in Buffalo County, which has the designation as "9" on license plates issued by the State of Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles. If uniforms were issued by counties of the Huskers, here's what some current players would be wearing:

No.	Name	Hometown	County	Should Wear
5	Brendan Holbein	Cozad	Dawson	18
7	Scott Frost	Wood River	Hall	8
11	Matt Turman	Wahoo	Saunders	6
14	Lance Brown	Papillion	Sarpy	59
19	Jesse Kosch	Columbus	Platte	10
28	Brian Schuster	Fullerton	Nance	58
30	Ahman Green	Omaha	Douglas	1
44	Jon Hesse	Lincoln	Lancaster	2
57	Chad Kelsay	Auburn	Nemaha	44
91	Ryan Terwilliger	Grant	Perkins	74
97	Jeff Ogard	St. Paul	Howard	49

One to Remember

Even some Sooner standouts agree, the 1971 Nebraska-Oklahoma matchup won't be forgotten.

by Kevin Warneke

Too often, heavily hyped college football matchups end up being nothing more than big disappointments.

But Chuck Fairbanks will always remember the 1971 Oklahoma-Nebraska matchup as one that lived up to its billing. "It was a game of great individuals and great team performances. It turned out to be a great game."

Even in defeat. "I think Oklahoma fans might even remember that game as special, even with the loss."

Fairbanks, who coached the Sooners from 1967-72, isn't alone in remembering the 35-31 Husker victory with as much fondness as a loss can allow. Three former pupils share his sentiment.

"I thought it was a great game, said Greg Pruitt, a Sooner running back who's now a sports agent based in Houston. "I can see why it's been called the greatest college game ever. I'm proud to have been a part of it.

"I think either team could have won."

Sooner quarterback Jack Mildren said he can understand why Husker fans still remember the game so fondly. The media, he said, won't let him forget.

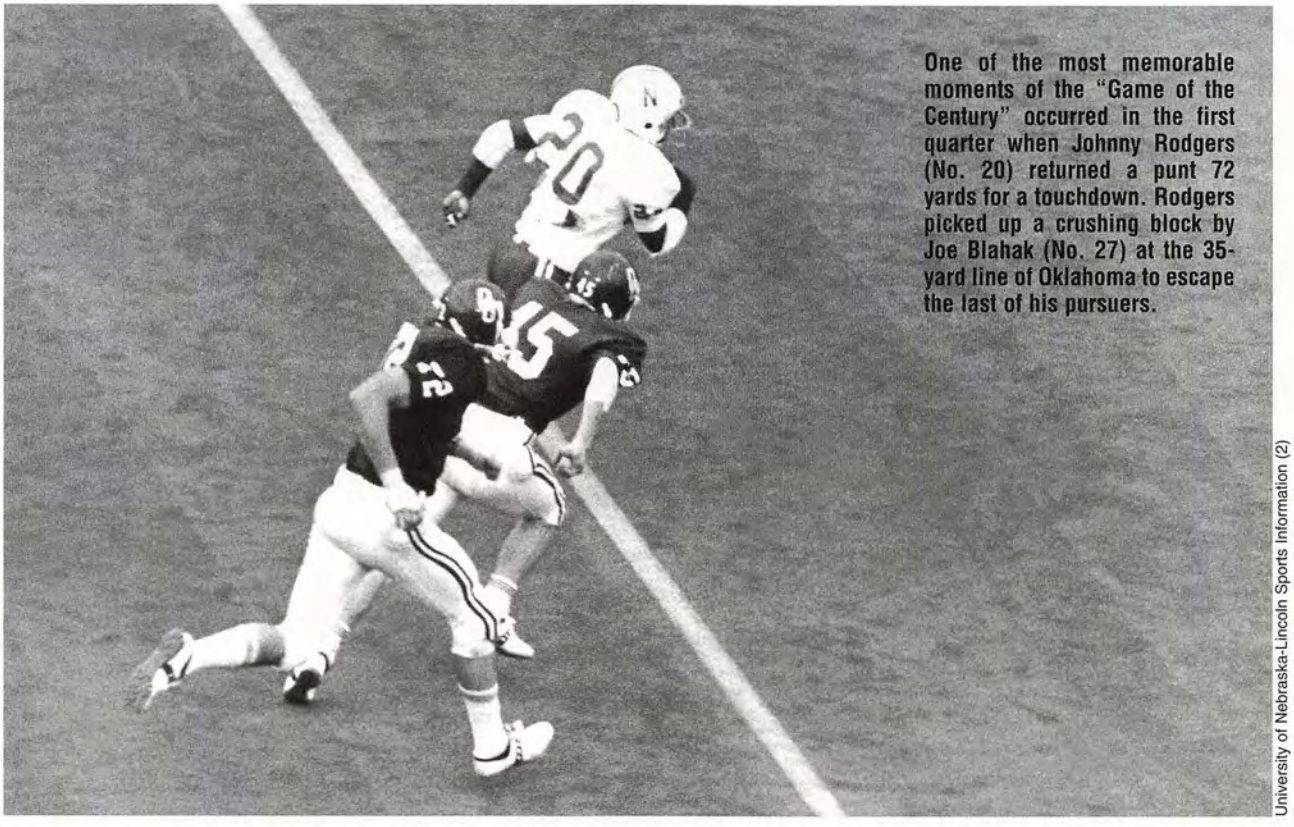
Every year — about this time — someone asks Mildren to talk about the game that got away for the Sooners. This year is no different, especially because 25 years have passed since Nebraska brought its No. 1 ranking into Norman for a showdown with the No. 2-ranked Sooners.

Courtesy photo

Jack Mildren

"It's not just Nebraska that wants to talk about the game," Mildren said. "I can't count the number of interviews I've done. It's people from all over."

Mildren then lists a litany of interviews he's given — some with former Husker quarterback Jerry Tagge — during the years. The



One of the most memorable moments of the "Game of the Century" occurred in the first quarter when Johnny Rodgers (No. 20) returned a punt 72 yards for a touchdown. Rodgers picked up a crushing block by Joe Blahak (No. 27) at the 35-yard line of Oklahoma to escape the last of his pursuers.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Sports Information (2)

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Chuck Fairbanks — 1971 Photo

Florida press called when the Huskers were battling teams from the citrus state in bowl games. A New York radio station called wanting Mildren to relive the game.

Nebraska's 1971 victory is often referred to as the "Game of the Century," and the former Sooner quarterback doesn't disagree. He does put a Sooner spin on the contest befitting a former lieutenant governor of the state: "You're talking about the game that ended too soon." Meaning, give the Sooners a little more time and the outcome may have been different.

Possibly, even probably, but Nebraska fans know who won: their beloved Huskers, en route to a second straight national championship.

No matter what the outcome, Mildren said, this game had all the makings of a classic:

- Both teams played well and both teams were able to move the football.
- Both teams played to win.
- The referees didn't control the game.
- The atmosphere was electric. The Oklahoma-Nebraska matchup was the only football game on television that day.

"These days, with so many games on, the importance of big matchups has been diluted a tad," Mildren said.

Twenty-five years have a way erasing the memories, but Mildren, Pruitt and Tom Brahaney still can recall the finer details of what went right — and wrong — that overcast day at Owen Field when the Huskers came calling.

Brahaney, an All-American center who played nine years in the National Football League, doesn't remember getting caught in pregame hype. "Maybe linemen just don't notice that sort of thing."

Brahaney did consent to a pregame ABC television spot with Nebraska noseguard Rich Glover.

"It was no big deal. It was over in seconds," he said.

The two would get to know each other well in the coming hours in just one of the game's many memorable matchups: the Sooners' high-powered offense against the Huskers' stingy defense, the quarterback duel featuring Mildren and Tagge, the battle of marquee running backs in Pruitt and Jeff Kinney, and the strategies of two offensive coordinators named Osborne and Switzer.

Fairbanks added another aspect: coach and player. During his playing days at Michigan State, Fairbanks' position coach was a Spartan assistant named Bob Devaney.

Jack Mildren — 1971 Photo

University of Oklahoma sports information (2)

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While both teams warmed up before the game, the two coaches talked about how Devaney's coaching career was nearing its end, while Fairbanks' was just beginning.

"That game and Coach Devaney have a special place in my heart."

Despite his sentiments, Fairbanks said, Oklahoma was well prepared for the Huskers. Oklahoma figured the Huskers would focus on stopping the Sooners' outside option — and they did. So Oklahoma looked inside and to its passing game.

Counter plays — especially with Mildren keeping the ball — worked well. So did the Sooner passing attack.

By halftime, Mildren had passed for 124 yards, completing 4 of 6 passes. He was at his best as the first half neared its end. Mildren first hit Jon Harrison for 43 yards to the Nebraska 24. On the next play, he hit Harrison again for a touchdown to put Oklahoma up 17-14 at the half.

Mildren's success passing meant the Huskers had bottled up the Sooner rushing attack to some extent. Pruitt, who went on to a 12-year career in the pros, remembers being frustrated by the few times he was carrying the ball, and telling his coaches so.

"They told me Nebraska was keying on me," Pruitt recalled, "but that was the way it was all year."

While the Huskers held Pruitt in check, fullback Leon Crosswhite had success up the middle. Brahaney, who now helps run the family oil business in Texas, remembers Oklahoma finding running room whenever the Sooners ran a misdirection play.

Oklahoma's success on offense couldn't prevent a number of mistakes. The Sooners fumbled in each of the game's first three quarters. Pruitt fumbled as the first quarter ended, which the Huskers converted into seven points. "We fumbled the ball a lot," Pruitt recalled. "That was part of running the wishbone."

Mildren's fumble came just after the Sooners had held Nebraska to open the third quarter. The turnover prevented the Sooners from capitalizing on the momentum they gained by scoring just before halftime and by shutting down the Husker offense just after.

"I can walk to the spot on the field where I fumbled," said Mildren, who is now president and CEO of Pre-Paid Legal Services Inc.

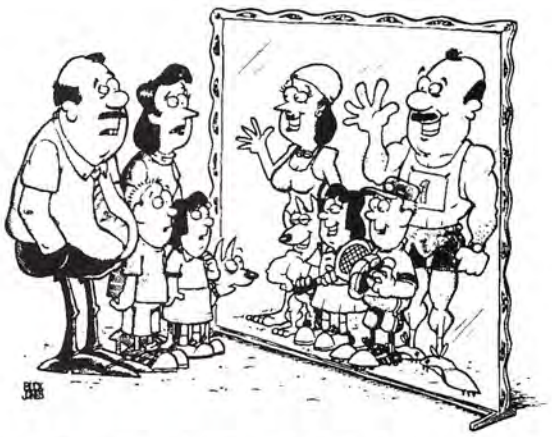
Fairbanks, who's retired and living in Arizona, said in a game full of big plays, a particular one stands out in his mind. It's not Johnny Rodger's first-quarter punt return for a touchdown or Mildren's touchdown passes.

It's one that Husker fans probably haven't given a second thought to and probably don't even remember. With the Huskers trailing 31-28 midway through the fourth quarter, Tagge led Nebraska on what would be the game-winning drive.

Facing a third and eight from the Oklahoma 46, Nebraska needed a first down or risked giving up the ball. Tagge rolled to his right and barely eluded an Oklahoma defender before hitting Rodgers for 11 yards and a first down.

"That play was so critical," Fairbanks said. "It was such a decisive, deciding factor. Had we stopped him on that play, Nebraska would have had to punt. Oklahoma probably could have run out the clock."

Instead, Nebraska continued its march deeper into Sooner territory. Husker fans know the rest of the story. NSA



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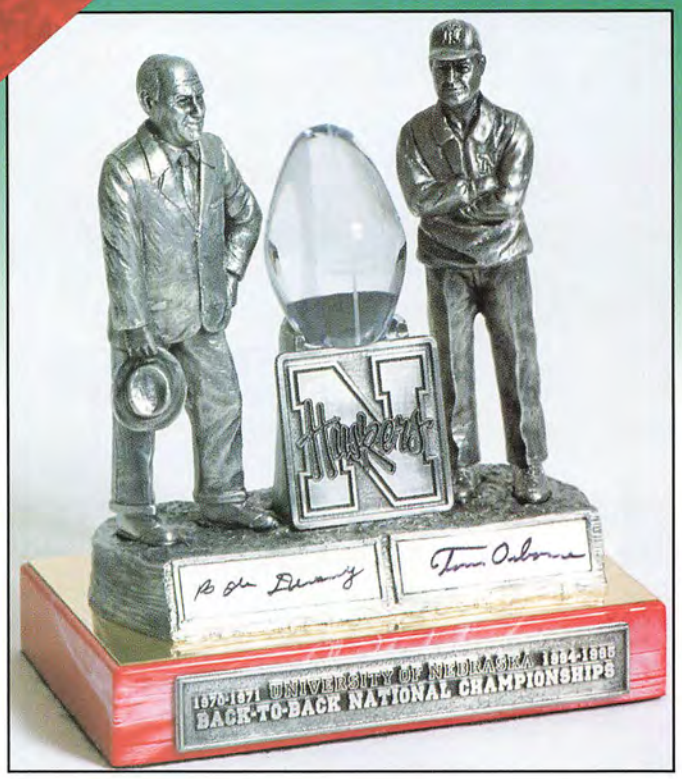

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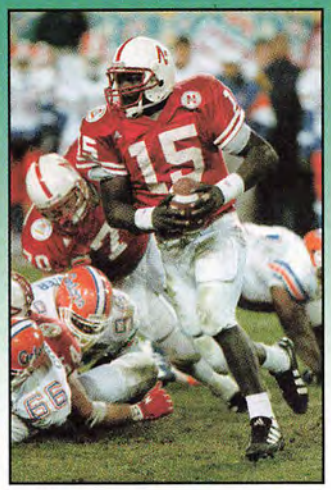

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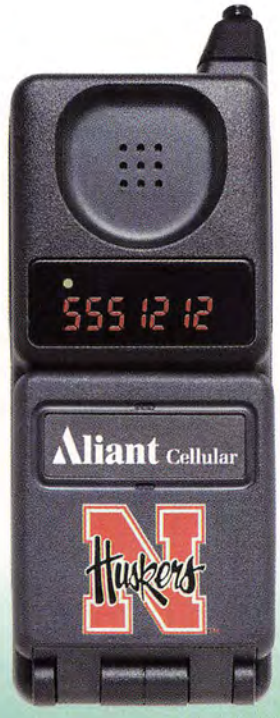

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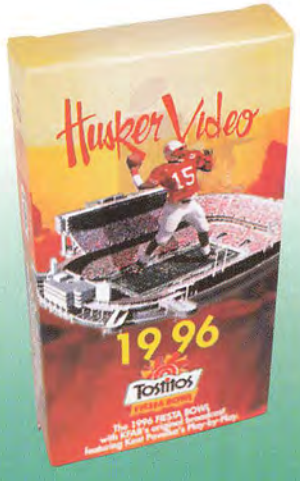

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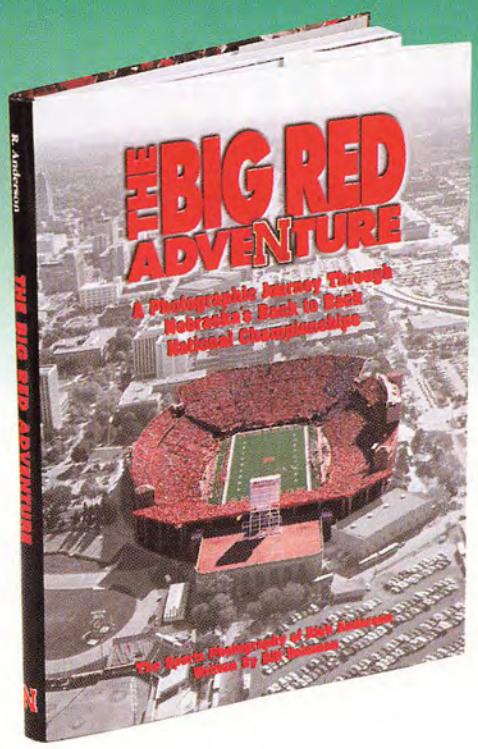
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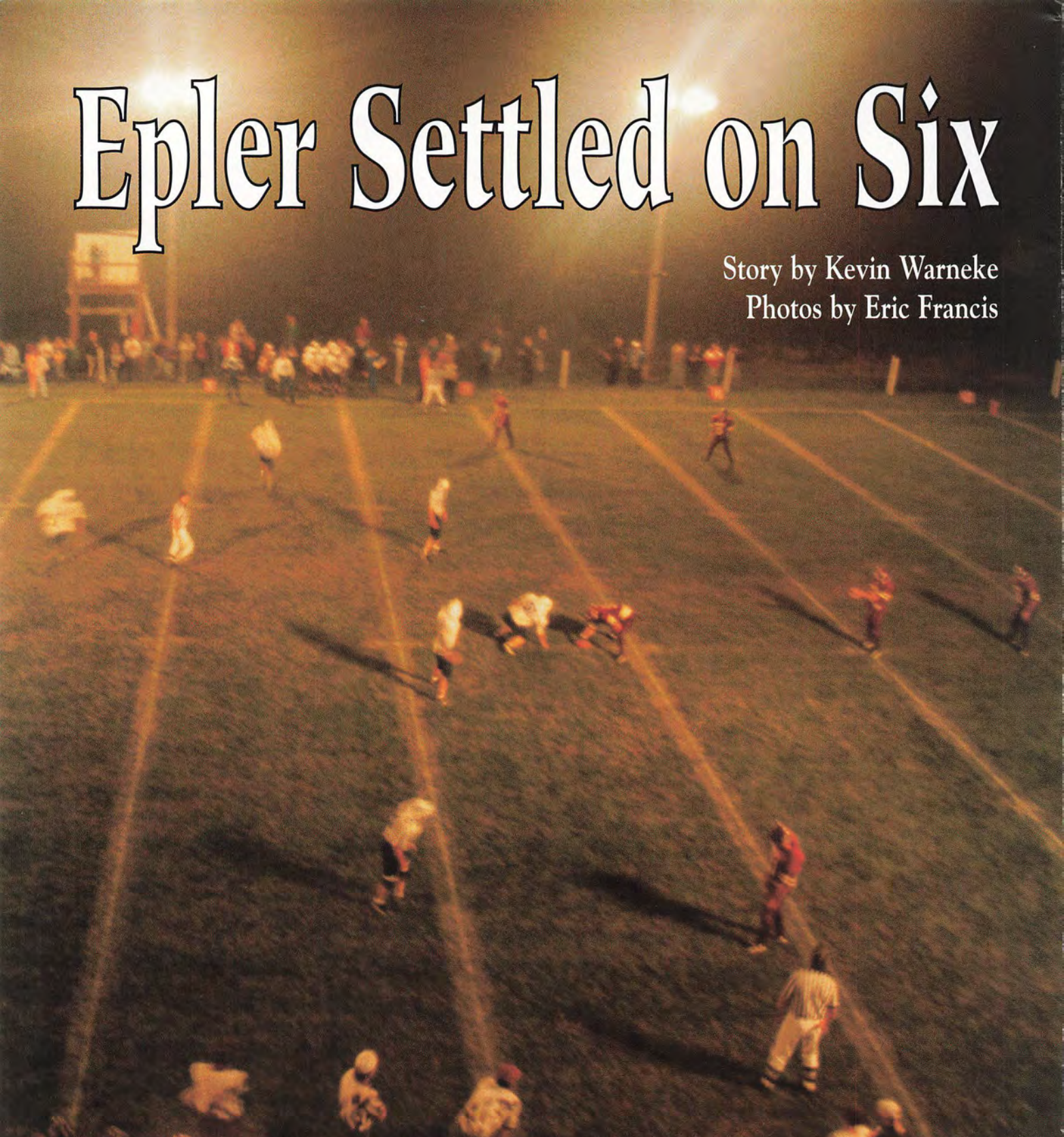
Epler Settled on Six

Story by Kevin Warneke
Photos by Eric Francis



Time Magazine described it as predominantly a passing game, not only faster, but apparently safer than standard football.

Sixty years later, the Wall Street Journal called it a sprinter's game, with crowd-pleasing appeal.

Through the decades, six-man football has endured. The micro-version of the 11-man game features an open throttle offense where everyone is eligible, points that often come easily and quickly, and players who must be ready to run.

This is a brand of ball that places more emphasis on speed than size, and has its roots firmly set in Nebraska.

Six decades ago, Stephen Epler decided the boys in Chester, Neb., needed an autumn distraction. The school offered baseball in the fall, but once the World Series played itself out, the sport lost its appeal.

He asked about 11-man football, but his school superintendent kept saying no. Costs were high and the school didn't have enough boys to field an adequate team.

Epler had an idea: What about a game with fewer players and different rules? "My superintendent told me: 'You invent the game and I'll get it set up.'"

"I thought: 'This will be an easy thing.'"

Epler devised his game as part of a graduate seminar project at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His assignment was to write a paper and get it published.

His scheme back then was simple. Six players instead of 11, with everyone eligible but the center to catch a forward pass. The first back to touch the ball had to make a "clear pass," meaning a pitch or forward pass before the ball could be advanced across the line of scrimmage. An offensive team had to gain 20 yards to earn a first down. Players wore basketball or tennis shoes as a way to cut costs.

Epler's innovation debuted Sept. 26, 1934, with a doubleheader in Hebron before an estimated crowd of 1,000. The first game, featuring players from Beatrice High against Hebron Academy, ended in a scoreless tie. The second, which matched high school players from Chester and Hardy, called the Hardchests, against boys from Alexandria and Belvidere, nicknamed the Belalex, also ended in a tie, 19-19.

With five minutes remaining, and the Chester-Hardy contingent leading 19-13, Jack Sloey scored from 50 yards out, which tied the game for good.

"Both teams were satisfied," Epler recalled. "The publicity was immense and word spread nationally. I began to receive requests for information about the game from across the country."

Times were tough in 1934. The country was still just five years past the collapse of the stock market and the beginning of the Great Depression. Schools looked to cut costs while still giving youngsters a chance to participate in organized athletics.

Six-man football was their solution and, during its heyday, some 2,000 schools played the game.

In Nebraska, 21 schools are playing with six on their sides during the 1996 season. For coaches Mark Rotter and Gary Brown, Epler's invention has become a way of life.

Rotter admits his Benedict Eagles football squad was overwhelmed three years ago when the school switched from eight-man to six-man football. "It was just a nightmare. We didn't know what we were doing."

Now they do. The Eagles opened the 1996 season with a 31-6 victory over Brown's Prague Panthers, the 1995 Class D-3 runner-ups.

Rotter said he likes six-man football because his players must be fundamentally sound. "We have to be. We only have 13 out this year."

A NUMBERS GAME

It's 11-man football without the guards, tackles and tight end. It's eight-man football minus two linemen.

Gary Brown of Prague High School said six-man football is that and much more. It's a game where quickness and speed are valued commodities, and players must be conditioned and durable.

Although the game has changed slightly since its beginning, six-man football means high scores and a special set of rules.

SIX-MAN FOOTBALL FEATURES

- A field 80 yards long and 40 yards wide. Kickoffs are from the 30; touchbacks mean the offense starts at the 15.
- Four downs and 15 yards earn a team a first down.
- A successful field goal is worth four points; a kicked point-after attempt two points. A point-after attempt through the air or on the ground is worth one.
- Handoffs are not allowed. The ball must be thrown or pitched one yard before it can be advanced across the line of scrimmage.
- All six offensive players are eligible to catch passes.
- If a team is ahead by 45 or more points by halftime or at any time in the second half, the "mercy rule" is enforced and the game is over.

With a center and two ends, some offenses line up in a tight formation, with the quarterback behind center. In a spread formation, the ends can be up to 15 yards from the center, the quarterback is away from center with the halfbacks either in front or behind. Snaps sometimes go to a halfback, who pitches to the quarterback, enabling him to pass or run.

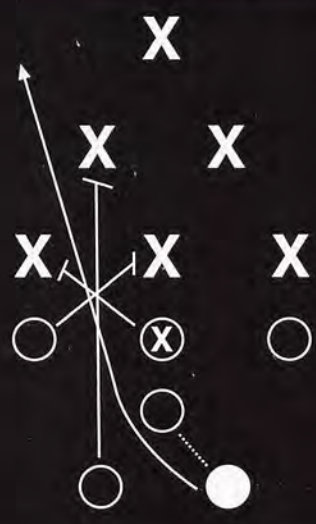
Defenses vary. A three-one-two formation is used against teams that like to throw deep. Two-three-one schemes are used against teams that throw to the flats, while a four-two is a standard goal-line defense. A two-two-two formation counters teams that run outside.

Brown said his Prague Panthers rarely line up in a man-to-man defensive spread. "If someone gets beat, you're in trouble."

Meaning, six points.

SPLITBACK ISO LEFT VS. 3-2-1- DEFENSE

How this play develops:
Operating against a 3-2-1 defense, the offense lines up in a 3-1-2 set. The center (designated by a circle with an x), snaps the ball to the quarterback, who pitches to one of two running backs behind him. The running back then follows the lead block of the other back through the line.



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In six-man football, a skilled kicker, Rotter said, is a valued commodity. The change in the traditional scoring, he said, reflects the emphasis placed on kicking.

Points often come easy in six-man football, the coaches said, especially when one team has better skilled players. Brown's Panthers have scored 38 points in a quarter and 68 in a game. Last season, as state runner-up, the Panthers scored 611 points in 12 games.

The prototype six-man player, Brown said, is a 200-pound running back with speed. "A team that has six of them is going to be awfully difficult to beat," he said.

"It's a game of speed. It's a track meet. Whichever team has the faster players usually is going to win."

Brown had one of the best last year in running back Jeremy Stanislav, who gained more than 2,000 yards on 112 carries last season, while scoring 38 touchdowns. "Remember, we played only two games that lasted four quarters," Brown said.

Stanislav was the first six-man player to play in the annual Shrine Bowl and the first six-man player to walk on at Nebraska.

"He's opening the door for future six-man players," Brown said.

Epler would be proud. Now retired and living in California, Epler still follows his game. Two years ago, when Prague hosted a six-man squad from Irving, Texas — the first time teams from the two states met — Epler called Brown to talk shop.

Last year, the Nebraska High School Sports Hall of Fame inducted Epler into its membership. "He was the only one of the inductees to receive a standing ovation," said Reuben Schleifer, a longtime friend, former coach at Chester and six-man football historian. NSA

Prague Coach Gary Brown knows the bench is a shallow one in six-man football.

BASEBALL STRIKES OUT

Courtesy Photo

Dr. Stephen Epler

Even America's favorite pastime wasn't sacred to Dr. Stephen Epler.

If football could be played with six players on a side, Epler figured, so could baseball.

Epler's innovation drew some publicity, but attracted little support. The retired college administrator understands why.

His version eliminated the shortstop, third baseman and center fielder, turned the diamond into an equilateral triangle with three bases and reduced the count to two strikes for an out and three balls for a walk.

"It just didn't catch on like six-man football," Epler said. "There wasn't a need for it."

While six-man football emphasized smaller, quicker players, he said, all sizes of competitors can excel in baseball.

Epler said he wasn't overly disappointed that his version of baseball didn't catch on. Neither did his idea of football for girls, with no tackling and, of course, six on a side.

"P.E. teachers would have nothing to do with it," he said.

Where are they now?

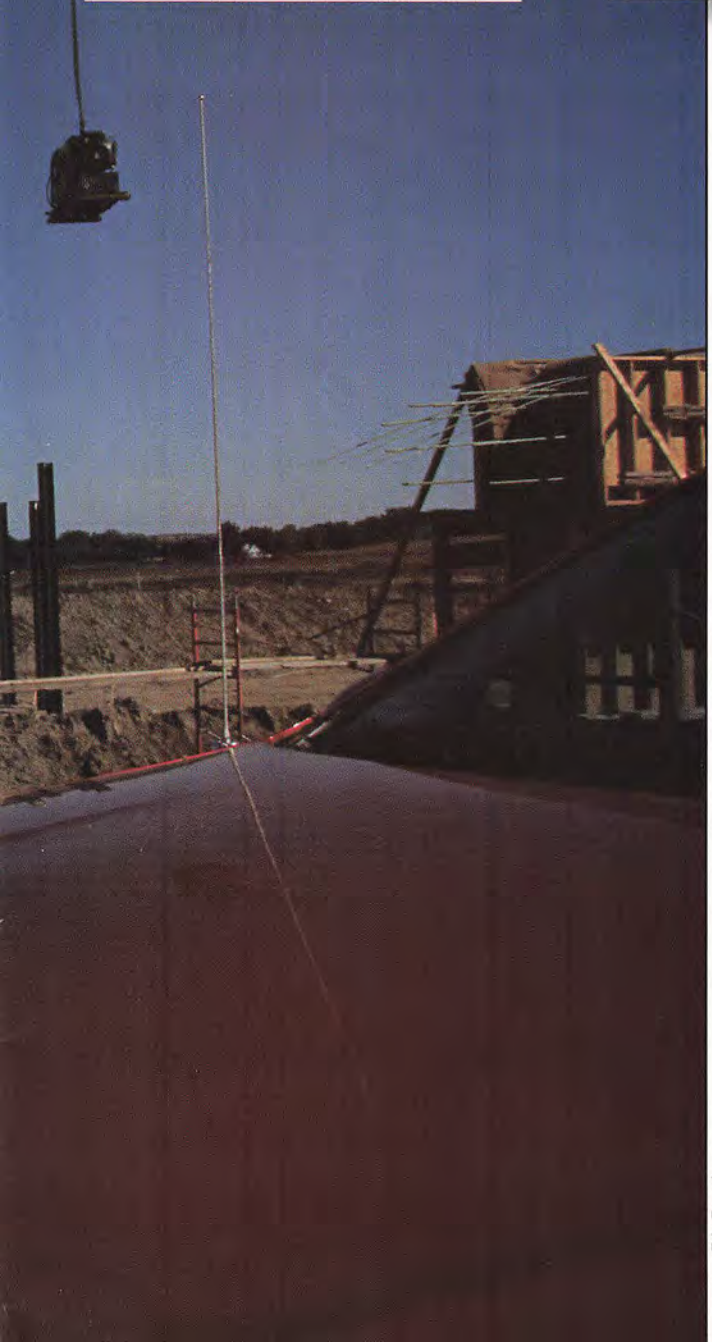
All in a Day's Work

In his younger days, Mark Traynowicz solidified the Husker offensive line.

Now he's laying the foundation for even bigger things.

By Kevin Warneke

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Sports Information



Eric Francis

As a geotechnical engineer for the State Department of Roads, Mark Traynowicz spends his time building bridges and overpasses instead of knocking down opposing defensive linemen like he did as a Husker (above) in the mid-1980s.

Motorists traveling U.S. Highway 34 west of Aurora might want to stop and see Mark Traynowicz' handiwork.

During the mid-1980s, Husker football fans witnessed his skill at blowing holes through opposing defensive lines and at protecting Nebraska quarterbacks.

These days, Traynowicz has his sights on building solid foundations for the bridges and overpasses on Nebraska's highway system. A geotechnical engineer for the State Department of Roads, Traynowicz is at home talking about piling and borings. He talks about the Aurora project and the bridge at Niobrara, which will span the Missouri River. The Aurora project involves driving steel pipe piling into clay; the Niobrara project is unusual because engineers must drive 150-foot piling into rock on one side of the river, and set concrete footing on rock on the other side.

"It really is interesting," said Traynowicz, a 1984 All-American center out of Bellevue West High School. At 6-foot-6 and 265 pounds, Traynowicz is not likely to hear much disagreement.

Whether on the football field during his younger days or on a construction site, Traynowicz always has excelled at what he does. "He was a really intelligent football player," Husker line coach Milt Tenopir said. "He made the transition from tackle to center. He was one of our best players during his time."

When Tenopir describes Traynowicz' attributes as an offensive center, he talks about his mobility, how well he operated on the ground and that he played with heart.

When Lyman Freemon talks about Traynowicz's attributes as an engineer, he uses words such as licensed, knowledgeable and respected.

Freemon, state bridge engineer, said Traynowicz earned his keep with the department of roads. He has the respect of his colleagues. "It's not given away," Freemon said.

Traynowicz doesn't play his football career up with his co-workers. In fact, Freemon said, he doesn't talk football much at all. "I'll occa-

sionally talk with him about the coming season. That's about it," Freemon said. "He doesn't talk about his pro experience."

Traynowicz said he enjoyed his days as a Husker and his time in the pros. That was then, he said, and time marches on. Still, Traynowicz will reminisce a bit, when asked.

He said academics always were important to him during college. Many nights, he and Husker teammate Ken Graeber would spend their time studying. "I studied as hard as I worked at football. I'd get upset if I didn't get an A or a high B," he said, then added: "Some nights, we'd go out and have fun."

Rose Traynowicz said her son excelled in the classroom at an early age. While her other sons — Luke and Buzz — spent their time helping Dad at the his A-1 Body Shop, Traynowicz stayed closer to home, mowing the lawn and handling other chores.

"She always told me I didn't have to play football. I could use my brains. It was always 'Oh, Mom.' I wanted to play football."

When he did help out at the body shop, he became the gopher, running errands for his father, Matt, and his brothers. "There was a hill outside and it was my job to keep the weeds down."

Traynowicz said, while at Bellevue West, he never considered himself a major college prospect. "There were probably some people who didn't think I deserved a scholarship."

"He's being modest," Tenopir said. "He was a good, solid player coming out of high school. He deserved his scholarship."

Tenopir said Traynowicz holds his own in the long Husker list of quality centers — Dave Rimington, Jake Young, Tom Davis, Bill Lewis and Rik Bonness.

Whenever Husker Coach Tom Osborne called during Traynowicz' senior season of high school, his father's ears perked up. "He would ask Mark 'What did he say?'" Rose Traynowicz said.

Although the heavy workload at the body shop kept the eldest Traynowicz from sports at times, customers at A-1 can see his devotion to his son and the Huskers. The body shop's first-floor office and the stairway leading to the second is covered with old Memorial Stadium astroturf. The Huskers replaced the turf before Traynowicz' senior season, and the elder Traynowicz gobbled up a portion of the old green carpet.

Traynowicz said he didn't think his father's remodeling project was obsessive. "I thought it was pretty neat. I guess he just needed carpet."

Playing professional football didn't enter into Traynowicz' plans until his junior season — the year Mike Rozier, Turner Gill and Irving Fryar made Husker offense a household name.

When people realize Traynowicz played on the 1983 Husker squad, talk inevitably turns to the 1984 Orange Bowl and the two-point attempt that got away. "That's what

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people talk about the most."

And Traynowicz always tells them. But that incomplete pass from Gill to Jeff Smith isn't foremost on his mind.

When Traynowicz talks Husker football, he focuses on the friendships and the good times. He remembers fishing the Miami River with his Husker buddies from behind their hotel during the '84 Orange Bowl trip. They used shrimp for bait and had some success.

"The other guys were out doing who knows what, and we were fishing. We actually caught a few."

Some football creeps into the discussion, including the Penn State matchup at the 1983 kickoff classic. "That was the year we kicked the tar out of them, 44-6."

He also remembers former UCLA Coach Terry Donahue's prophetic words in 1983 after the Huskers thrashed the Bruins 42-10 in Lincoln. Donahue pledged that next year's score at Los Angeles wouldn't be the same. "It was 42-3," Traynowicz said. "I guess, in a way, he was right."

Following his senior season, in which he earned all-academic, all-conference and All-American honors, the Buffalo Bills selected Traynowicz in the second round.

Back then, Jim Kelly was playing in the USFL, Bruce Smith was an NFL neophyte and Thurman Thomas was competing in the Big Eight. In other words, the Bills were bad. Their string of Super Bowl disasters still were several seasons away.

The Bills went 2-14 during Traynowicz' rookie season, with former Husker quarterback Vince Ferragamo behind center and another former Husker, Bruce Mathison, waiting on the sidelines.

Eric Francis

Traynowicz's father, Matt, maintains a "trophy room" of memorabilia from his son's playing days in the office of his body shop.

"Then, we got Jim Kelly and things started getting better." Only Traynowicz' time as a Bill was drawing to a close. The Bills waived him midway through the '88 season — the same season Buffalo advanced to the AFC championship game. Traynowicz bounced around the league a little longer.

When the Phoenix Cardinals waived him midway through the '89 season, Traynowicz decided to call it quits. "I could have been one of those guys who kept trying and trying to catch on. I didn't want that."

Instead, he returned to Lincoln to start a new phase in his life. "At the time, I was tired of football. Physically, you get tired. Mentally, you get tired. You just get worn out."

These days, don't expect to see Traynowicz settled in at Memorial Stadium each Saturday when the Huskers are playing in town. It's not that he doesn't care how the Huskers fare; his priorities just are different.

Saturdays, expect to find Traynowicz outside working on his lawn or gardening with his oldest son, Kramer. Family time with his wife, the former Alison Boyd who was the 1984 Miss Nebraska, and sons Kramer and Cole take priority.

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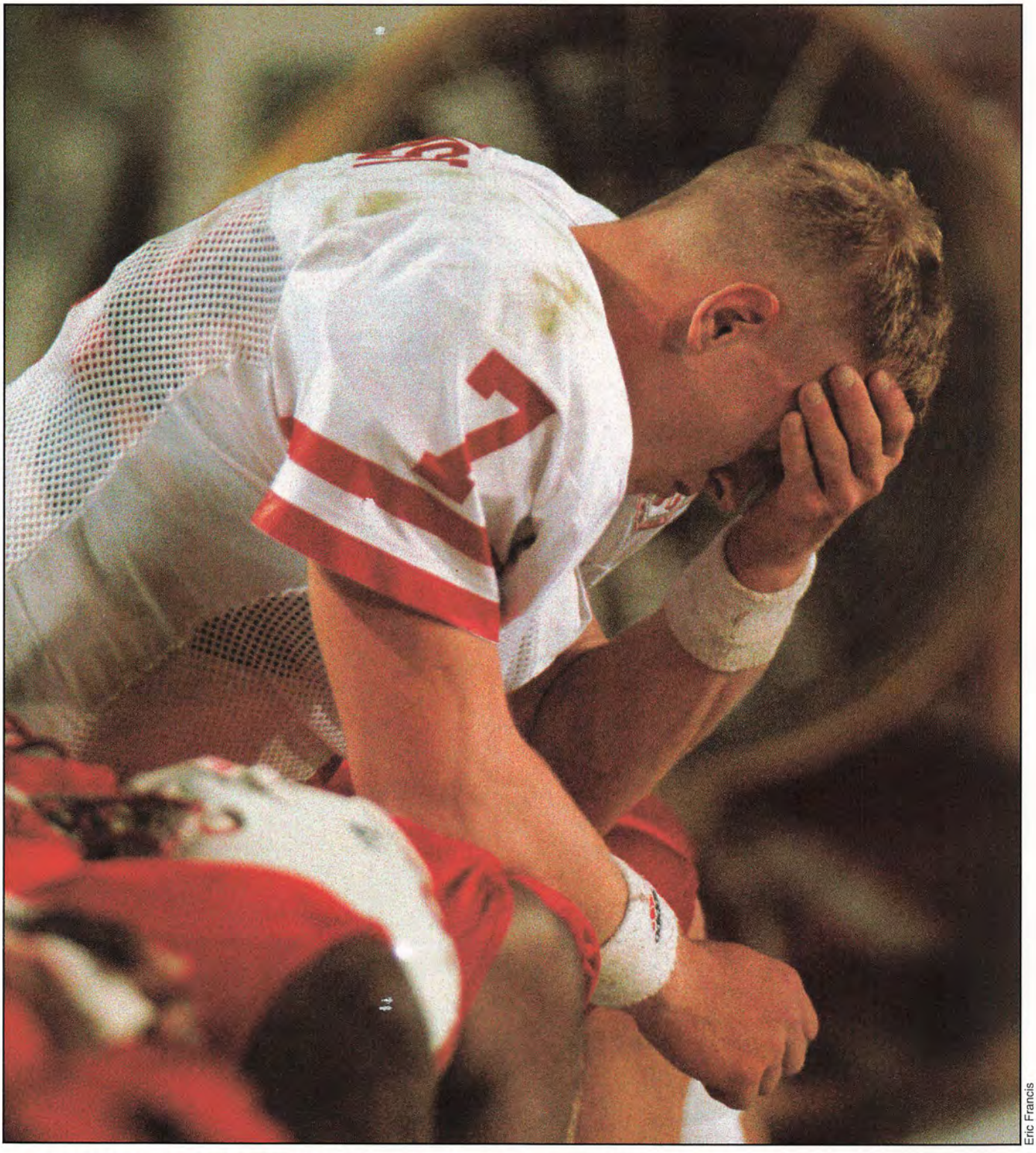

Eric Francis

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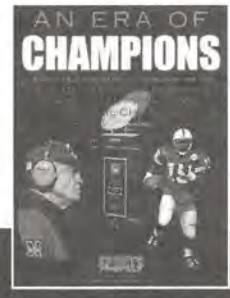

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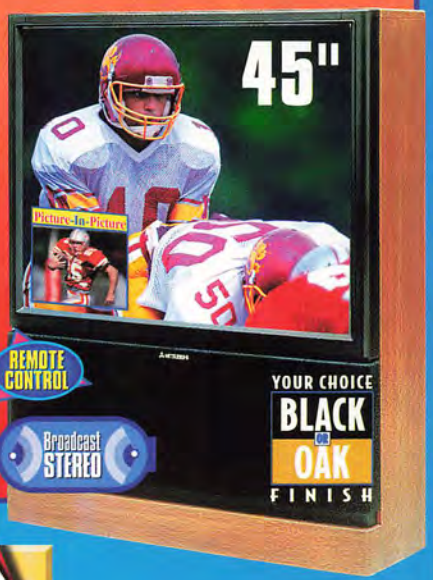

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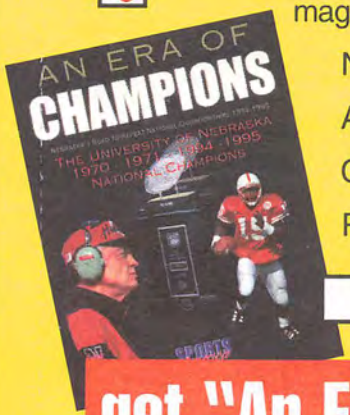

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Order today your beautiful color 22"x 28" Brook Berringer Poster

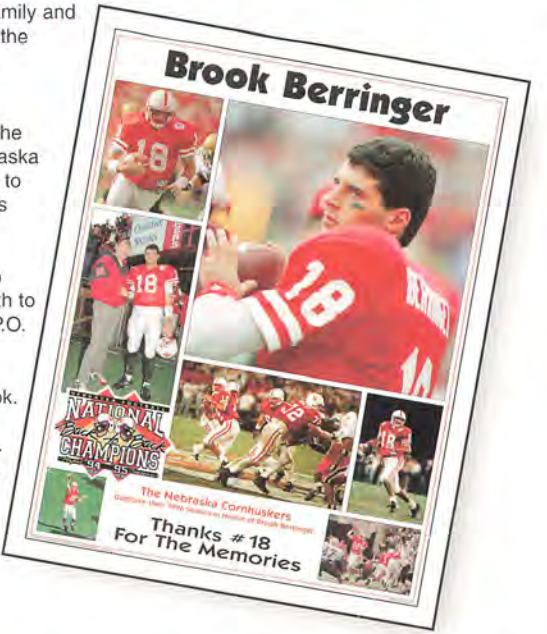
" I will never forget the tremendous support Coach Osborne has given to my family and I since the tragic death of my dear son, Brook. I am extremely grateful to all of the Nebraska Coaches, players and athletic staff for their outpouring compassion, especially, the love shown from Coaches Ron Brown and Turner Gill.

To date, I have received over 10,000 sympathy cards and letters from all over the world. From the bottom of my heart, I thank the thousands of friends and Nebraska fans who write to offer words of comfort and to tell me how much Brook meant to them. I don't know if those who wrote will ever know how much their kind words were of comfort to my family and I.

I do know that the pain of losing Brook will never go away, but, knowing that so many people are out there thinking and praying for us, this gives us the strength to carry on. I would like to encourage everyone to continue to write to me at the P.O. Box listed below. I love hearing from those who love Brook.

I am very excited about the new poster that has been created in Honor of Brook. Many thanks to Icon Imaging, Inc. and The Omaha Printing Company for their production of this poster. Special thanks to Joe Mixan, who directed this project. Joe's beautiful photos make this poster a collector's item for all those who love Brook and Nebraska Football. Every time I'll see a Brook poster hanging in someone's office or in their Big Red room, I will consider it a wonderful tribute to my son. Seeing the poster will spark a memory of Brook that will make me smile. May God Bless you and your family. With all my heart, Thank you so very much for all of your love and support."

With Love, Jan Berringer



To order a poster or to send a personal note, please write to me at;
Brook Berringer - Make it Happen Fund
P.O. Box # 1 18 Goodland, Kansas 67735

$10 donation per poster. Please include $3 per order for shipping.
Posters will be shipped rolled in a crush-proof tube/ First-Class U.S. Mail

Your $10 donation for each poster is very much appreciated. The proceeds from this poster will benefit People and Organizations that Brook so dearly loved.